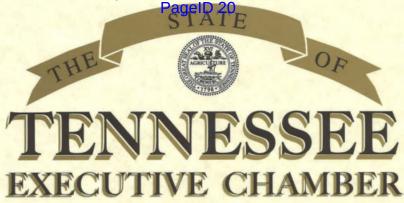
EXHIBIT A

se 2:25-cv-02714-TLP-tmp Document 1-4 Filed 07/14/25 Page 2 o



PARDON

TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, between August of 1999 and September of 2003, DeAndre Brown was convicted in the Criminal Court of Shelby County, Tennessee, of theft over \$10,000 (case no. 99-03598); theft over \$1,000 and forgery (case no. 02-08975); and burglary of a motor vehicle (case no. 02-08976); and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's constitution and statutory law authorize the governor to grant executive clemency, including the power to issue pardons; and

WHEREAS, this case appears to me to be a proper one for the exercise of executive elemency for the following reasons:

Since 2009, Mr. Brown has been helping ex-offenders successfully re-enter society. He founded Lifeline to Success with his wife, and now leads the Shelby County Office of Re-Entry. Mr. Brown is a pastor and mentor who has encouraged numerous other people to be the best versions of themselves. Mr. Brown is renowned throughout his community as a role model and inspiration to others. Mr. Brown is surrounded with the support of his family, friends, and community. The Tennessee Board of Parole recommended granting a pardon to Mr. Brown.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by Article III, Section 6 of the Tennessee Constitution and by the laws of the State of Tennessee, do hereby grant a pardon in favor of Mr. Brown pardoning him for his 1999 through 2003 convictions listed above.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State to be affixed at Nashville, Tennessee on this 15th day of December, 2023.

GOVERNOR

SECRETARY OF STATE

AGRICULTATI AGRIC

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL



30th JUDICIAL DISTRICT ~ SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE 201 Poplar Avenue, Eleventh Floor, Memphis, TN 38103-1947 Tel. 901-222-1300 ~ Fax 901-222-7971 www.scdag.com

District Attorney General

August 19, 2021

Mr. Richard Montgomery, Chairman Tennessee Board of Parole 500 James Robertson Parkway, 4th Floor Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0850

RE: Pardon application of DeAndre Brown

Dear Chairman Montgomery:

I am writing in support of DeAndre Brown's request for a pardon of his state criminal convictions.

In 1999, DeAndre Brown pled guilty to Theft of Property over \$10,000 in Criminal Court Division 1 in Shelby County (Indictment 99-03598). He was sentenced to 8 months at the local workhouse and 6 years of probation. He was ordered to pay restitution to the victim in the amount of \$87,771.68

He violated his probation by committing a Theft of Property over \$1,000 and Forgery. He pled to those crimes in 2003 (Indictments 02-08975-76) and was placed on probation for six (6) years. During this time period, he was prosecuted by the federal government as well for separate crimes.

One of the criteria to be considered is whether an applicant for pardon has demonstrated exemplary citizenship. I can think of very few people who are better citizens than DeAndre Brown. He has contributed more to this community-specifically the Frayser area—than most people accomplish in a lifetime of clean living. He and his wife have sacrificed everything for their re-entry program, Lifeline to Success. His passion and drive to help ex-offenders stems from knowing better than most that your past crimes do not define you unless you allow them to. It is hard to be around DeAndre and not be infected by his generous spirit and zeal to make this community better—one individual at a time.

I have known DeAndre for about 10 years. We have joined forces on countless prevention and intervention efforts over the years. He is a leader in our community and easily deserving of this extraordinary relief. He is, in my opinion, exactly the type of person who should benefit from pardon.

Mr. Richard Montgomery, Chairman August 19, 2021 Page 2

I spoke to the victim on his case from 1999 a few weeks ago. He summed it up best: "I have seen that guy on the news over the years and love how he has turned himself around."

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions about his prior cases or the work he has done in Shelby County.

Sincerely,

AMY P. WEIRICH District Attorney General

MULTIPLYINGGOOD THE POWER OF SERVICE TO OTHERS

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Governors, Emeritus
Billy Shore
Lesley Stahl
José Antonio Tijerino
Hon. Kathleen Kennedy
Trownsend
Troy D. Vincent, Sr.
Chris Wallace
Hon. Jeffrey P. Yarbro

December 10, 2021

DeAndre Brown
Sent via electronic mail

Dear DeAndre,

Thank you for everything you do to Multiply Good.

As a distinguished Jefferson Awards recipient, we are writing to invite you to join the Multiplying Good Board of Selectors – one of the most prestigious bodies of its kind. For nearly 50 years, our Board of Selectors' diversity of experience, breadth of influence and commitment to excellence has uniquely positioned this group to elevate the very best in America through the Jefferson Awards.

Multiplying Good offers an opportunity to unite our nation in service and change the narrative to celebrate the best. We want you to join us in this crucial mission. As a Jefferson Award recipient, you are uniquely positioned in the ways you already live our mission and impact. At this pivotal moment, your voice is essential to bringing our focus back to the good.

As a Selector, your role is simple, helping us identify, nominate and vote on each year's slate of national Jefferson Award winners. It is our promise to work with you and to identify the areas of engagement most exciting to you and ensure your commitment works within the confines of your schedule.

Please see the attached summary of Board of Selectors responsibilities. If you have any questions, you can reach me at <a href="https://hi

We will reach out to follow up.

With our most sincere gratitude,

they of for

Hillary Schafer

CEO

Jack Russi

Chair, Board of Governors



Board of Governors:
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April 27, 2021

DeAndre Brown Lifeline to Success

Sent via electronic mail

Dear DeAndre,

Multiplying Good (formerly known as the Jefferson Awards Foundation) was founded in 1972 by Sam Beard, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr., and its Jefferson Award is America's most prestigious award celebrating extraordinary service to others.

It is our privilege to inform you that you have been nominated for a 2021 Jefferson Award in recognition of your commitment to improving the lives of others through service. After receiving your nomination and putting it through a rigorous internal voting process, the Multiplying Good Board of Selectors, a who's who of notable public figures, chose you as a finalist for Outstand Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged. Past recipients of this award include Bill & Melinda Gates, Bryan Stevenson, Mariska Hargitay and First Ladies Barbara Bush and Rosalynn Carter.

The Jefferson Awards offer a rare opportunity to unite all Americans in celebration of the good that is happening all around us – empowering outstanding recipients like you to do even more and inspiring those who hear the impact of your story into action. The Board would like to recognize your outstanding personal commitment to assisting formerly incarcerated individuals with the skills needed to re-enter the community and work force.

Hillary Schafer, CEO of Multiplying Good, will contact you to answer any questions you may have and to confirm your acceptance of this award. You may also reach her at (917) 656-0005. Please visit our website to learn more: www.multiplyinggood.org

Sincerely,

Hillary Schafer

CEO

Jack Russi

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Chair, Board of Governors



August 16, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to write a letter in support for my friend and colleague DeAndre brown with the request for pardon. We met over 10 years ago when this young man and his wife came to Frayser to begin a reentry program. I found that his passion and drive to take his past experiences to build a better life not only for him, but others were valent.

DeAndre and I spend time together not only as Pastors or community organizers; I am happy to be his mentor. He grew up in a home with some powerful women that worked hard to form what we see today. Yes, the streets may have caught him at a time, but the love of his family saved him. I have walked in to give the male bonding every man needs. We debate, laugh, and know that the love we have for each other is Ginuwine.

An accomplished one man within the City of Memphis/Shelby County, I must also tip my hat to DeAndre as an awesome husband and father. He shares with everyone that he was not the best father to his to older sons, but he is making strides with them as men. And you will not see him at an event without the trail of young Brown's behind him. His wife works alongside him to give him the confidence and push to keep moving forward. They are a team that my wife and I love to sit with and share.

At this phase in DeAndre's life, I believe that he has not just proven himself to be transformed. He walks daily to be a servant to all. His walk is not a walk because he must; it is a walk that is normal to him. God has touched Deandre; God has commissioned DeAndre to make a difference in Memphis. I ask that you give him a gift of a pardon to show others when you are in the deepest of valley's there's a hand reaching to get you out if you put the work in. DeAndre has put the work in.

Thank you for your time. If you need to contact me, please call me at Pursuit of God Transformation Center (901) 353-5772.

Regards,

Pastor Ricky Floyd

The Honorable Bill Lee Governor of the State of Tennessee First Floor State Capitol 600 Martin Luther King Blvd Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0001

July 23, 2021

Dear Governor Lee:

I am writing this letter to give my support to DeAndre Brown, Sr.'s efforts to obtain a pardon from the State of Tennessee. As a 26 year law enforcement practitioner I cannot think of a more deserving individual than DeAndre Brown. Since his incarceration, DeAndre has made a positive influence on countless lives by ensuring that men and women who need support to transform their lives are given a chance to do just that.

I first met DeAndre 8 years ago while responding to a call regarding a kidnapping at Life Line to Success. When I arrived on the scene, I noticed a sign on the building with DeAndre's name and phone number. When I called him, he was eager to assist us. DeAndre was able to help safely resolve the situation that turned out to be a dispute between 2 coworkers and not an actual kidnapping. We have been friends ever since.

DeAndre's decision, in 2010, to create Life Line to Success and the BLIGHT PATROL has had an impact on the lives of those he serves and assists in an effort to reduce crime in the Frayser community of Memphis. His commitment and stick-to-itiveness during these many years have never wavered. He is someone I am proud to call my friend.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely.

Mike Shearin

2775 Dewhurst Cove Germantown, Tn. 38138

January 7, 2022

Dear Governor William Lee,

Greetings, my name is Deacon Henry Littleton. I am Catholic Clergy here in the Diocese of Memphis.

I first met DeAndre Brown back in 2011 at a Frayser Pastor Association meeting, and sometime there after joined LifeLine's Board of Directors. At that time, I was the business manager of Our Lady of Sorrows (OLS) Catholic Grade School, where the Brown's children attend. At this point in time, a long, personal and inspired relationship with the entire Brown family began, of which I'm most thankful.

The Church I'm assigned to as Deacon- OLS- is located in Frayser, one of the largest communities in Memphis, and possible one of the poorest. I was Baptized and attended School at OLS, and have attended Sunday services there my entire life.

Back in the 60's & 70's, Frayser was a vibrant community, home to the largest Methodist and Catholic Church in Memphis, and was the residence for many of prominent families of Memphis. However, with the closing of International Harvester, Firestone Tire and several other plants, Frayser fell on bad times, and to this day is still struggling to reclaim its past glory.

The two organizations that have, and are today, contributing the most for the resurgence of Frayser, is Frayser Community Development Corp. (FCD) and LifeLine to Success (LTS). I can attest to the fact that of the many social justice efforts that have occurred here in Frayser, FCD and LTS are two that have truly made a difference in the lives of those they serve.

As a past board member of LTS, I had the opportunity to meet and spend much time with the LTS "Team Members", all of which are past violent offenders, and to personally witness the changes made in their lives. The work of DeAndre and his wife, Vinessa, has be transforming not only to the lives of those they serve, but to the community of Frayser, Memphis and Tennessee.

I pray, that based on the life DeAndre has created for himself, and the service he has performed for those in need, will move you to consider a pardon for his past offences.

Deacon Henry Littleton



600 Jefferson Ave. · Suite 400 · Memphis, TN 38105 901.527.2600 · Fax 901.577-0286 · www.memphiscrime.org

January 7, 2022

The Tennessee Board of Parole 500 James Robertson Parkway, 4th Floor Nashville, TN 37243

To the Board of Parole:

I understand that DeAndre Brown is seeking a pardon for his conviction in Shelby County on state forgery and theft charges. At the time of his conviction in state court, I served as the district attorney for Shelby County (30th Judicial District). I wholeheartedly recommend DeAndre's pardon.

In my current capacity as president of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and as executive director of the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute, I have had the opportunity to work with DeAndre and observe his activities in the community. I can say without hesitation that this community is blessed and a better place because of DeAndre.

DeAndre is the founder of Lifeline to Success, which has helped hundreds of ex-offenders become productive members of the community. It is one of our most successful re-entry programs due to his leadership over the years.

Recently, DeAndre was appointed by our county mayor as the director of the Shelby County Office of Reentry (SCOR), which is the lead umbrella organization helping ex-offenders who have been incarcerated and have re-entered the community. It is the official Community Resource Center in Shelby County for the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC). Since being director, DeAndre has significantly scaled up SCOR activities, especially in the area of job placement.

District Attorney Amy Weirich has launched a focused deterrence effort, which focuses on serious, high-risk offenders identified by TDOC and who are on parole or probation. DeAndre has been an integral part of this effort to help move serious, high-risk ex-offenders in the right direction.

DeAndre has become a true mentor to many ex-offenders in our community. He has developed strong relationships with law enforcement and prosecutors. He has become an outstanding community leader. I strongly recommend his pardon.

Sincerely,

Bill Gibbons

President, Memphis Shelby Crime Commission

Bin Ym

Executive Director, University of Memphis Public Safety Institute

Burch Porter johnson

Lawrence J. Laurenzi Direct: 901.524.5156 llaurenzi@bpjlaw.com LAW OFFICES
Burch, Porter & Johnson, PLLC
130 North Court Avenue
Memphis, TN 38103
Phone: 901.524.5000
Fax: 901.524.5024

bpilaw.com

June 8, 2023

VIA EMAIL

BD.Clemency@tn.gov
Executive Clemency Unit
State of Tennessee
Board of Parole
Davy Crockett, 4th Floor
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0850

Re: Pardon Hearing - DeAndre Brown No. 00308362

Dear Members of the Board of Parole:

On behalf of DeAndre Brown, attached to this email are multiple articles, videos, and letters of support that were attained on behalf of Mr. Brown that were used in his Application for a Presidential Pardon. We are representing Mr. Brown pro bono in his request for a Presidential Pardon. The matter is presently past the application stage and is now under full investigation by the Department of Justice. I have attached materials provided to DOJ as it is relevant to your same consideration by the State of Tennessee.

I was with the Department of Justice for 36 years. My prosecutorial career was spent in the Western District of Tennessee in the United States Attorney's Office where I served as First Assistant United States Attorney for 16 years and Criminal Chief for 10 years. I was also United States Attorney 2008-2010 and served as Acting United States Attorney on three other occasions. During my tenure, we routinely reached out to Mr. Brown for assistance in various prevention, intervention, and rehabilitative programs. He has been and continues to be a true friend of the Department of Justice and local and state law enforcement. He is dedicated to the re-entry efforts in West Tennessee as evidenced by the material provided. His can-do attitude, his work ethic and his understanding of the complexities of reentry efforts has proven to be invaluable asset to West Tennessee.

Unfortunately, my schedule fails to prevent me from appearing on his behalf on June 22, 2023, as I am out of the city. However, I would like to emphasize, while at the United States Attorney's

Office, I was most stringent in the office's position for request for Presidential Pardons. However, In DeAndre's case I can state unequivocally and without hesitation that Governor Lee should pardon DeAndre Brown. He has proven that he is deserving of such a monumental act by the Governor. His pardon would have a far-reaching impact, not only on Mr. Brown but to thousands of other federally convicted felons and their hope for rehabilitation and redemption.

Very truly yours,

BURCH, PORTER & JOHNSON, PLLC

Lawrence J. Lawrenzi

Enclosures



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building 11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 15, 2022

Linda A. Moore Shelby County Government Communications Specialist Office: 901.222.2322 Mobile: 901.517.2969

SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS PROMOTES DEANDRE BROWN TO PERMANENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SHELBY COUNTY OFFICE OF REENTRY

DeAndre Brown has expanded existing programs and started new ones that help ex-offenders rebuild their lives after incarceration.



Shelby County, TN – Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris announces today, March 15, 2022, that DeAndre Brown, has been promoted to permanent executive director of the Shelby County Office of Reentry. Brown has served as interim executive director since August of 2021. Brown and his wife, Vinessa Brown, founded Lifeline to Success, a nonprofit organization for exoffenders, after his own incarceration and reentry.

VASCO A. SMITH, JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 160 North Main Street, 11th Floor Memphis, TN 8103 901-222-2000 Fax 901-222-2005 www.shelbycountytn.gov



Since joining the Office of Reentry, Brown has expanded programming focused on the mental health of returning citizens. The office has hosted a job fair and block party that drew hundreds of visitors. He has extended the FOUSED program to include inmates with the Division of Corrections. FOCUSED is an 11-week program that combines job training with other assistance like family reconnection, financial literacy, and voting rights restoration. In addition, Brown has also established inside the prison training programs for janitorial work and the care of natural African American hair.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: "DeAndre Brown has shown that he is devoted to helping the formerly incarcerated turn their lives around. We had hoped his experience and connections to the community would help to grow the reentry programming, and, we were right."

Office of Reentry Executive Director DeAndre Brown: "I still don't believe this is happening. I am actually living the dream. I promise the citizens of Shelby County to use everything in me to make sure the men and women in this program have an opportunity to be successful when they return from prison."

The Shelby County Office of Reentry is located at 1362 Mississippi Blvd. It connects exoffenders to resources and employers willing to hire them. In addition to the FOCUSED program, there is technical and vocational training for small engine repair, construction, low voltage electrical apprenticeships, and forklift operation. Partners with the Office of Reentry include Southwest Tennessee Community College, HopeWorks, Alliance Healthcare Services, Christ Community Health Services, Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center, and Economic Opportunities.

For more information, visit scofficeofreentry.com.

(End of Release)

Memphian

Page 16 of 64

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Shelby County to build transitional housing for exoffenders

By Julia Baker, Daily Memphian

Updated: May 05, 2022 4:00 AM CT | Published: May 05, 2022 4:00 AM CT



DeAndre Brown, director of the Office of Reentry, stands in front of a demolished home that will be turned into new transitional housing for ex-offenders next to its office, on Thursday, April 28, 2022. (Mark Weber/The Daily Memphian)

Some ex-offenders who are showing progress in turning their lives around will soon have the opportunity to stay in transitional housing next to the Shelby County Office of Re-Entry in South Memphis.

The county began demolition of a house next to the office April 25 and will soon begin construction on the new housing.

The goal is to expand the campus so opportunities can be provided to ex-offenders who may have trouble reentering society due to social stigma. By being provided these opportunities, ex-offenders may be less likely to reoffend in the future.

Office of Re-Entry turning vacant buildings into transitional housing

"We found that one of the real barriers to a successful return to the community after having served a stint in prison is not just finding a job," Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris said. "It is also, in many cases, finding a place to live, a stable place to live. And so we're going to try to enter that space. And we're going to try to do it thoughtfully by engaging with the community."

The house, at 1348 Mississippi Boulevard, was an abandoned, blighted 1950s-era home previously owned by The Works, Inc. and gifted to the county so it could expand the campus.

Although other organizations have built similar transitional housing, this will be the first of its kind for Shelby County. The county <u>first attempted</u> to convert abandoned properties into transitional housing near Gleason Avenue and Wilson Street in South Memphis in 2019, but that plan deal fell through due to a Tennessee law.

"There is a state law that says you can redeem your property," Harris said. "If it's lost through foreclosure, you can redeem the property. And the owner, I don't know if it's an out-of-town owner or not, but they took advantage of that state law. And they actually redeemed the property, so they ended up getting it back. I think it's still blighted now."

The house on Mississippi Boulevard is still in the process of being demolished, and the county will wait to begin construction until it gathers input from the community.

So far, \$300,000 has been approved by the Shelby County Commission to fund the project.

Some time after this project is done, the county will begin a next phase and build additional housing on a property across the street.

The transitional housing will augment the office's FOCUSED program, which is an 11-week training program that helps with job readiness and gives ex-offenders opportunities to be selected for one of the office's vocational training programs. Through the program, participants also learn about family reconnection, financial literacy, healthy living, expungement and voting rights restoration.

The housing could hold as few as four ex-offenders or as many as 10.

Once former offenders are housed there, the main requirement is to continue to participate in the program.

"Our program is holistic," said DeAndre Brown, executive director of the reentry office. "So the programming should make sure that they're following that. ... That should cover all of those boundaries to keep them on the straight and narrow."

Officials also hope the presence of the expanded campus and decreased blight will create a safer environment in the surrounding neighborhood.

The county has established a transitional housing task force to assist with hammering down more details like construction dates and rendering plans.

Sometime in May, the county will host a kick-off event to gather community input.

TOPICS

SHELBY COUNTY OFFICE OF RE-ENTRY TRANSITIONAL HOUSING EX-OFFENDERS FOCUSED



<u>Julia Baker</u>

MULTIPLYINGGOOD THE POWER OF SERVICE TO OTHERS

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April 27, 2021

DeAndre Brown
Lifeline to Success

Sent via electronic mail

Dear DeAndre,

Multiplying Good (formerly known as the Jefferson Awards Foundation) was founded in 1972 by Sam Beard, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr., and its Jefferson Award is America's most prestigious award celebrating extraordinary service to others.

It is our privilege to inform you that you have been nominated for a 2021 Jefferson Award in recognition of your commitment to improving the lives of others through service. After receiving your nomination and putting it through a rigorous internal voting process, the Multiplying Good <u>Board of Selectors</u>, a who's who of notable public figures, chose you as a finalist for Outstand Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged. Past recipients of this award include Bill & Melinda Gates, Bryan Stevenson, Mariska Hargitay and First Ladies Barbara Bush and Rosalynn Carter.

The Jefferson Awards offer a rare opportunity to unite all Americans in celebration of the good that is happening all around us — empowering outstanding recipients like you to do even more and inspiring those who hear the impact of your story into action. The Board would like to recognize your outstanding personal commitment to assisting formerly incarcerated individuals with the skills needed to re-enter the community and work force.

Hillary Schafer, CEO of Multiplying Good, will contact you to answer any questions you may have and to confirm your acceptance of this award. You may also reach her at (917) 656-0005. Please visit our website to learn more: www.multiplyinggood.org

Sincerely,

Hillary Schafer

CEO

Jack Russi

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Chair, Board of Governors



Source: Multiplying Good February 07, 2022 19:48 ET

Multiplying Good Announces TWELVE New Members Appointed to the **Board of Selectors**

New members will enhance board's focus on elevating the very best in America through the Jefferson Awards

NEW YORK, NY, Feb. 07, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Multiplying Good, the nation's leading nonprofit focused on fueling personal growth and leadership through public service, announced that twelve new members were appointed to its Board of Selectors in January 2022. The Board of Selectors, one of the most prestigious bodies of its kind, has leveraged members' diversity of experience, breadth of influence and commitment to excellence in their work to nominate and vote for national Jefferson Award recipients each year.

LARRY BLACKERBY, LA QUINTA, CA Larry Blackerby is a retired Emmy winning television executive with over 40 years of experience, Larry has managed TV stations all over the country with his most recent stops in Houston and Indianapolis, Larry began his involvement with Multiplying Good in 2000. He introduced the Jefferson Awards as a media sponsor in Palm Springs, CA, Houston, TX and Indianapolis, IN. He helped establish the Indiana Board for Multiplying Good where he served as a board member. Additionally, Larry created best practices for local Jefferson Award events, and has worked with staff to recruit other broadcasters nationwide to become media partners.

DEANDRE BROWN, MEMPHIS, TN A Memphis native, DeAndre brown split his time growing up between Memphis and rural Arkansas. A gifted student, he spent two years on a pre-med track at Rhodes before being lured by the easy money of being a career criminal. After nearly two years in prison, he learned about landscaping, found his faith, and became a "jailhouse preacher." A recipient of the national Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged in 2021, DeAndre Brown currently supports LifeLine to Success, a non-profit organization he founded with his wife and was recently named the Executive Director of the Shelby County, TN, Office of Reentry. In both roles, Brown works to find resources for former inmates and supports their transformation into assets for society, working to change negative perceptions that are commonly associated with a criminal record.

VIVIAN SCOTT CHEW, CLOSTER, NJ Vivian Scott Chew is undeniably a pioneering risk taker in every sense of the word. She stands as an innovative figure in the global music and entertainment industry with an accomplished history at ASCAP, Polygram Records and Sony Music. As Founder and Principal of TimeZone International - the first U.S. based African-American owned company that provides recording artists with international marketing and promotion services in expanded regions. Alongside her husband, Music Director and Producer, Ray Chew, Vivian is a founding partner in Chew Entertainment - a premiere event production firm. Together, they have a great reverence for live music working with clients such as The National Urban League, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, The American Heart Association, Jackie Robinson Foundation and Carnegie Hall where she and Ray are proud to have produced multiple installments of their starstudded concert, a "Night of Inspiration". Vivian serves on the boards of the New Jersey Council on the Arts, Covenant House International, Living Legends and is an advisor to the Universal Hip Hop Museum. She is the Co-Founder and President of The Power 2 Inspire Foundation, which was created with her husband to identify and nurture music creators and industry leaders.

DR. KIT EVANS-FORD, DAVENPORT, IA Chaplain, professor, author, and social entrepreneur, Dr. Kit Evans-Ford has been a trainer and activist for over 15 years working relentlessly in the areas of nonviolence education and assisting people in healing form violence and abuse. An Adjunct Professor in the Department of Theology, Women and Gender Studies at St. Ambrose University, she is a certified spiritual director and the founder of Argrow's House of Healing and Hope in Davenport, Iowa. Argrow's House is a safe space where free services are offered daily for women healing from violence and abuse in the greater Quad Cities area. Argrow's House is also a successful social enterprise where women healing from violence and abuse create beautiful bath products that provide a living wage for themselves in a safe space that celebrates who they are. Dr. Kit is a 2019

recipient of the Jefferson Award and the Jacqueline Communities.

MAJOR ETTA R. GRAY, MILLEDGEVILLE, GA A national Jefferson Award recipient in 2020, Major Etta R, Gray has dedicated her life to the service of her community. As a 30-year veteran of the Milledgeville Police Department, she has experienced firsthand how important it is to help children succeed. With a little help from the Chief of Police, Major Gray founded the Junior Police Academy, a summer camp directed at teaching children about avoiding drugs, gangs, peer pressure, and the importance of making good life choices. The Junior Police Academy was founded in 1999 and since then has grown from about 25 students to almost 150 students per year. When asked why these kids mean so much to her, Major Gray says, "I feel it is my personal mission to make sure that no kid goes without." Since then, Major Gray has been instrumental in getting programs in the force that help the community – like to Specialized Patrol unit that help guides the community. Major Gray also developed the Mentors In Blue (M.I.B.) program in 2016. This programs partners law enforcement officers with at risk youth in the community to be their mentors. In 2021, Milledgeville Police Chief Dray Swicord promoted Gray to chief of detectives, making her the first woman to ever hold the position with the Milledgeville Police Department. Major Gray motto is "My life is not mine alone, but one to be lived in service to others."

INGRID JOHNSON, NEWARK, NJ Ingrid Johnson, RN, MSN has been a nurse for over 20 years and is a nationally recognized expert in the field of Human Trafficking. In 2004, her 13-year-old daughter was missing for 11 months. Ingrid worked with law enforcement to recover her. Ingrid is manager of Patient Access at Overlook Medical Center a member of Atlantic Health System. She is co-chair of the Overlook Emergency Department Human Trafficking Committee. Ingrid is a founding member of the NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking and serves on the board of trustees and various committees. She serves on the NJ Commission on Human Trafficking. In 2018, honored by the Jefferson Foundation, Ingrid received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Champion for Justice Award and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting Local Communities.

RICHARD PEREZ, WEBSTER, NY A past recipient of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Service Benefitting Local Communities, Richard Perez has helped more than has helped more than 700 liver transplant recipients and 2,000 people who have undergone a transplant evaluation. Richard received his own life-saving liver transplant in 2003 and has made it his mission to educate others about organ donation and support families awaiting a transplant. From 2004 to 2010, Richard helped over 105 Rochester families avoid hotel costs and stressful daily commutes with his generosity. Thanks to Richard's efforts, according to the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network, the percentage of registered organ donors has grown from 27 percent to nearly 40 percent of viable residents.

PRISCILLA PUENTE, HOUSTON, TX A national Jefferson Award recipient in 2016, Priscilla Puente has been working as an operator at a LyondellBasell plant in Houston, Texas for over 15 years. She can still remember the amazement she felt from receiving her first paycheck, from the possibility that came with that kind of income. Her work with Pasadena Habitat for Humanity introduced her to The Bridge Over Troubled Waters (TBOTW), where she was able to tie that realization of economic opportunity to a cause. Priscilla decided to partner the Women of Steel, an activist branch of her union (United Steelworker Union Local 13-227), with TBOTW to change opportunities for women affected by domestic violence.

CHRISTAN RAINEY, NORTH CHARLESTON, SC Christan Antwan Rainey is the Founder and CEO of M.A.D. USA, Inc. (Men Against Domestic Violence/Abuse) an organization that is committed to reducing all forms of domestic violence. His passion for the work he does came as a result of losing five family members to domestic violence. Christan was appointed to be a part of the South Carolina Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force, and with help from other organizations throughout South Carolina and in 2016, the Domestic Violence Reform Bill was signed into law. In addition to his work at M.A.D., he is Assistant Chief with the North Charleston Fire Department and volunteers frequently in the area for other organizations. A TEDx speaker, Christan has an Associate Degree in Fire Science, Bachelors of Science in Fire Administration and is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. He received a national Jefferson Award in 2019.

DR. SANDY SAN MIGUEL, LAFAYETTE, IN Sandra F. San Miguel, DVM, PhD, is the associate dean for engagement at Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine. She leads the NIH NIGMS SEPA-supported League of VetaHumanz, a global, inclusive veterinary superhero league where veterinary professionals in academia, practice, research, government, and industry engage with community centers and schools across the globe to provide access and support for under-resourced children. Dr. San Miguel received a national Jefferson Award in 2019.

AMY RODRIGUEZ SHILLING, LADERA RANCH, CA With a commitment to service and a dedication to developing young leaders, Amy Rodriguez Shilling is best known for her work on the soccer field. On January 28th she retired from professional and international soccer after 11 pro seasons, two NWSL titles (2014, 2015), two Olympic gold medals (2008, 2012) and a World Cup championship (2015) and was named an assistant

coach for the University of Southern California, her all mater. She and her husband are the proud parents of two sons, Ryan and Luke.

VALERIE WEISLER, BELFAST, UNITED KINGDOM Valerie Weisler is a community builder and activist from New York. At 14 years old, she founded The Validation Project, a youth empowerment organization that has grown into a global movement over the past nine years. Valerie's activism led her to receive the National Jefferson Award for Public Service at 16 years old. Valerie is also a Truman Scholar and a L'Oreal Paris Woman of Worth. Her work has been featured by Glamour, CNN, Oprah Magazine, and more. She holds a B.A in Education Advocacy and a minor in Spanish from Muhlenberg College, and is currently living in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where she is pursuing a Master's in Children's Rights at Queen's University.

To learn more about Multiplying Good and the Jefferson Awards, please visit: http://www.multiplyinggood.org

About Multiplying Good

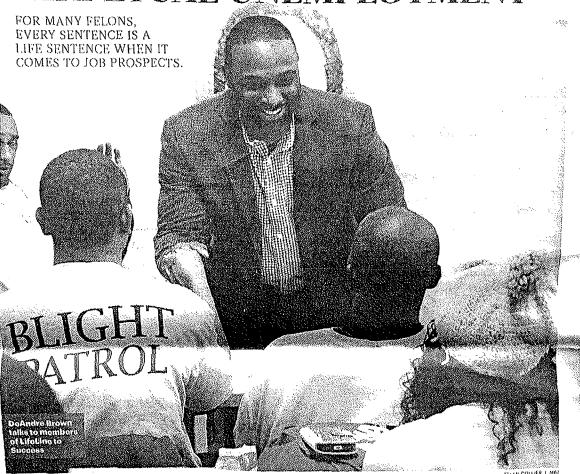
Multiplying Good is a national nonprofit that believes in the power of service to others to unleash potential, inspire individuals, and transform lives. Multiplying Good fuels personal growth and leadership development through a continuum that starts with engagement and culminates in recognition. It has offices in 11 communities across the country, delivering on-the-ground impact where it is needed most. Founded in 1972 by Sam Beard, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Senator Robert Taft, Jr., the organization has recognized the extraordinary public service of thousands with its Jefferson Award. To learn more, visit MultiplyingGood.org or follow Multiplying Good on Facebook.

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MEMPHIS BUSINESS JOURNAL

COVER STORY

MEMPHIANS WORK TO STOP PERPETUAL UNEMPLOYMENT



By ED ARNOLD . 901-259-1726 . carnold@bizjournals.com

fter strong storms knocked out power to several neighborhoods in North Memphis in mid-November, DeAndre Brown and his group of workers went out to help clear limbs in Frayser. Beating Memphis Light, Gos and Water crows to a downed tree on Signal Street, Brown's team quickly cleared the road, making the neighborhood near the Ed Rice Community Center passable again.
And they did it all for free.

And they did it all for free.

Brown's crew is comprised entirely of convicted felons. His organization, LifeLine to Success fnc., has become a haven for people who have recently been released from prison and are seeking a new life, as Brown himself did after a sint in prison.

After clearing the Signal Street debris, the crew headed back to LifeLine's After clearing the signin often control of the related was to include headquarters on Dellwood Avenue in North Memphis. Part classroom and part community center, the concrete block building buzzes with activity, much of it led by Brown himself.

Standing in front of about two dozon felons - all in motching bright green T-shirts with the words "Blight Patrol" printed across the back - Brown holds daily classes to help his group mayigate

the difficult transition back into society.

"We won't get the benefit of the doubt," Brown says, coaching his team on work skills. "You've got to make a habit of always doing what's right, even when no one is watching,"

If recent crime rate trends continue, Brown's class is likely to get much bigger,

The implications for Memphis and Shelby County - and its economic growth - are getting larger, ton.

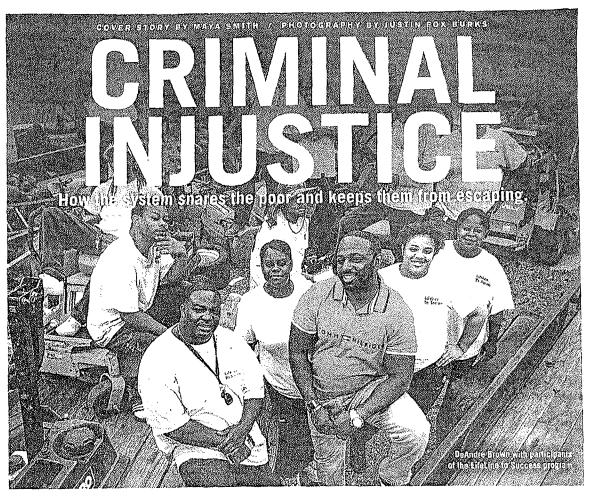
Most people keep a separate place

in their minds for violent and non-vi olent criminals, but nearly every sen-tence is a life sentence when it comes

Perpetual unemployment

Over the last two decades, the mun-ber of Americans who have had contact with the criminal justice system has grown significantly, leading to a large increase in the population of working-age people with felony convictions.

In 1991, about 1.8 percent of the nation's population had served time in prison. But, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), by 2007 that percentage had grown to 3.2 percent



DEANDRE BROWN says he was a career criminal. He started selling drugs on the streets of North Memphis nt age 19, and by 28, he'd worked his way up the chain of command to head the operation. Brown says he was a nerd growing up. Despite having to navigate his mom's crack use at a young age and commuting back and forth to rural Arkansas for grade school, he says he was a good student. He even got a full scholarship to Rhodes College and planned to become a doctor.

But there was a problem: He needed gas money to get him from his mous house in Raleigh to compus. Like so many growing up in poverty, Brown says he turned to illegal means to earn money because it was instant gratification.

He connected with guys in his neighborhood who were selling drugs out of the house next to his mom's. "I saw the opportunity to make some quick money," Brown says, "It looked easy for those guys to stand on the corner with

some dope in their pockets and walk up to cars. So that's what I did."

Twenty-five years later, just a few miles from where Brown ran a drug operation for nearly a decade, he now sits in his office in a converted Frayser house, it's where he's run an ex-offender re-entry program called LifeLine to Success since 2009, Brown believes he's an anomaly, because when someone - especially someone in poverty — gets into the criminal justice system, it's hard to escape.

IN THE SYSTEM

Josh Spickler, executive director of Just City, a Memphis organization striving



Josh Spickter

to miligate the damages caused by contact with the criminal justice system, says the system is "complicated and nuanced.

"It involves

rules of court and rules of evidence," Spickler says, "It involves laws. It involves procedure and so many things that you have to know to navigate it clearly and successfully,"

When someone in poverty is accused of a crime, those challenges are intensified, Spickler says. Wealth and poverty impact a defendant's experience from pre-trial to post-conviction, and possibly forever.

"People in poverty have had a lot more trouble getting back to even in the criminal justice system," Spicklor says. "And people of means, who didn't do anything too terrible, can usually buy their way back to even."

When the poor are accused, they are appointed counsel, while "people of means and wealth have always had the ability to hire the best criminal defense lawyer. The appointment of counsel is probably the biggest differentiator."

The country's public defense system was established by the U.S Supreme Court's 1963 Gideon v. Wainwright

decision, which acknowledged the right for a state-appointed attorney under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Spickler says this decision was a "great win for civil rights in America." but "what's followed has been anything but fully securing that right." He says the indigent systems are an "afterthought" in many communities. Public defenders largely lack significant resources and investigative tools private lawyers have, such as expert witnesses. which Spickler says are especially important in serious matters.

There are great public defender offices, and we have one right here in Memphis," Spickler says, "But, as great as they are, they have bad circumstances. They're representing 35,000 people with like 90 attorneys. You don't even have to know much about the law to know you don't want a lawyer with that many cases."

The Shelby County Public Defender's

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

office currently has 90 full-time attorneys and handled more than 24,000 cases in 2018, Approximately 2 percent -- \$9.3 million -- of the county's general fund is allocated to the public defender's office. Another \$5.5 million comes from the state. The public defender's office provided the numbers above, but declined to be interviewed further.

Another "glaring" issue, Spickler says, is pre-trial detention, which is xolely meant to deter the accused from committing another dangerous crime or fleeing to avoid prosecution if released. "But the way we do that, in this community especially, is with money," he says, "Based on a British system that's centuries old, we decided a dollar amount is the answer to that problem."

The idea, Spickler says, is if you have money on the line, you're incentivized to return to court and to not commit another crime. "We put a price tag on it, but the fact is, money has nothing to do with it," Spickler says. "With pretty high certainty, we can predict who comes back and who doesn't come back and who reoffends," Spickler says there is readily available data that should be used to assess people's risk instead.

But, we just say if you can pay this, you can get out, and if you can't, you can't," Spickler says, "That has nothing to do with who's risky and who's not. in fact, if you have the means, you're more of a risk, So why would we make it about money?"

Defendants who can't make bail must remain behind bars until their trial date, which could be a year or more down the road. Building a defense takes participation from the accused, which is hard to give in juil, Spickler says.

"Strike two, if you're poor, is that you have to make decisions about your case while you're behind bars." Most often, people in that situation enter a plea bargain, Spickler says.

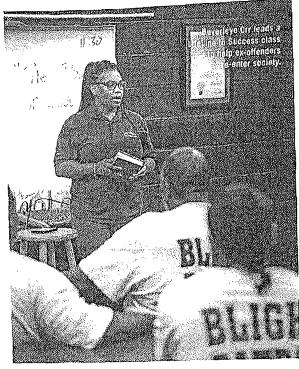
People are detained in cages before their guilt or innocence is determined," he says, "They are desperate to get out. They don't have the time or the resources nor the patience to build a defense in jail. Their incentive is to get out. A guilty plea is a better alternative."

Pleading guilty means they now have a criminal record and, depending on the crime, still might serve additional time behind bars.

PERMANENT PUNISHMENT

Spickler says with a record, exoffenders face "a myriad of challenges that are extremely insidious," impacting all parts of life. Lawyers refer to this as "collateral consequences."

"Collateral is a really bad word to use," Spickler says, "It implies it's an afterthought or not all that important, but it's everything. Moving on after life



within the criminal justice system is next to impossible for a lot of people, especially if you're poor."

One reason is expenses add up after incarceration, he says, "Every sentence passed down comes with a bill. A literal bill. Like a credit card bill." Post-conviction court costs can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Spickler says Tennessee is "particularly had" because the consequence for not paying them is drivers license suspension.

The costs aren't based on reality anymore," he says, "They've added costs for this, costs for that. If you go down the list, it's shocking the things we assess costs for. Things like building law libraries. It's astounding the amount that can rack up for relatively minor offenses, If the crime is at all serious and there's any jall time, then you can get into the thousands really quickly."

Spickler says a lot of Tennesseeans have lost their licenses because of this law, "I'm talking about 40,000 to 50,000 Tennesseans who can't move around legally."

And if ex-offenders can't drive, then they can't get jobs to afford to pay their court costs, Spickler says. If they do drive in order to get a job and are pulled over and found guilty of driving without a license, then there'll be more court costs to pay. "It just keeps going. For so many people, they can never pay it back." As a result, people are locked out of the mainstream economy, housing, and educational opportunities.

"When we lock people out of the

mainstream economy by taking away their drivers license or not hiring them because of prior history, we are steering them toward other means of supporting themselves." Spickler says. "And some of those are criminal. At best, they're underground and not paying taxes. But at the very worst, they're heading toward a world where crime is lucrative and appealing. The cycle builds on itself pretty quickly,"

A big piece of Just City's work is helping policy makers understand the full impact of their policies. Spickler says. "There are real consequences years and years later after criminal justice involvement," he says, "Perhaps there should be for certain offenses, but for so many, even after they are released, damage unnecessarily continues to rack up. We have to turn that around."

Spickler says these continuing consequences are anything but collateral, "Permanent punishment" is a better phrase for it, he says,

"When we pass laws dealing with people who've broken the law, it's important to maintain a civil and safe society," Spickler says, "But, we have to start thinking about how long we want the punishment to go on."

A LIFELINE

DeAndre Brown knows the struggle of re-entry all too well. Brown was incarcerated for the last time 14 years ago. In his first week of that 25-month-long prison sentence. Brown says he decided it was time to "try something different.

"Reality set in really quicky" Parage "Reamy see The says, "I made up my mind then to far says," I made up the menda to far says to be less than the menda to far says the says that says the says the says that says the says that says the says that says the says the says that says the says that says the says the says that says the says that says the says the says the says that says the s out a way to help other people he made

When he was released, Brown turned the janitorial service he once used as a front for his drug operation into a legitimate business. Brown on he and his family were doing well for about two years, until a haspital about his company was contracted to dead asked him to be a volunteer chaplan When the hospital did a background check, his contract was terminated

"The minute they found out I had a criminal history, they tank the key, Brown says. "They told me that logi"

Brown says he, along with his wife and children, were homeless after that Looking to support his family, he says finding a job was "out of the question" So he returned to the idea that spatial a prison - finding a way to help other; his situation, Brown says the termingen of the hospital contract was the impact for starting LifeLine to Success.

Brown says many ex-offenders are stuck when they're released, and finding an environment that's conducive to positive living can be the initial challenge With drive and determination to proce the world wrong," Brown mught in change that in Memphis

Through classes, volumeer work. employment, and therapeutic group settings, the LifeLine to Success program teaches conflict resolution and basic life skills, with the god of showing ex-offenders how to survive the world without resorting to carse. Since 2009, 1,216 ex-offenders have completed the program.

We have people who were living on the sidelines of life but now hwe the cleare to be involved? Brown says "They'd wake up, sit on the porch, set high, and play video games, but now they want to be productive because they've tasted what real life can be be

Brown says the program takes in people with multiple offenses that are mostly violent. They often have los skills, minimal education, and some mental health issues. "We take the folks people run from and are attaid of iril put them in a room together," Brown says, "And it works, h's all love."

The program works similar to a gang, Brown says.

We're just flipping what we know works in the hood and numing a around into something positive," Boost says. "We give them a culture, a culot. and some lit -- literature, I mean. Sorry, that's the gang code.

When participants start the program. they are not officially on the team, Brown says. But after they meet innud requirements, they receive a given T-shirt, indicating they've made the payroll. "The shirt makes grown med cry, Brown says. "They've never seeing a part of anything and now they me, and they didn't have to get best up to get at

The program's mission is to change

Document 1-4 PageID 44

the perception of what it means to be a convicted felon to both the community and ex-offenders, and Brown believes "we've exceeded that mission."

OVER-CRIMINALIZED

The number of people brought into the criminal justice system and accused of crimes far surpasses that number from

40 years ago, Spickler says, The Tennessee prison population is the largest it's ever been. In 1990, the state prison population was 13,975, according to Tennessee Department of Corrections data. That number rose to 30,799 in 2018. "We filled up our jails and prisons

and our courtrooms," Spickler says. "We've created so many more crimes The criminal justice system has been grown to tackle a lot of things in society." That's why Just City advocates for a smaller criminal justice system,

"When we say smaller, we mean a smaller budget and less use of the system for problems it can't fix. We have to depend less on the criminal justice system."

Thomas Castelli, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Tennessee agrees. He says, as a society, the country has over-criminalized certain behaviors.

"The government has the power to regulate certain conduct by citizens," Castelli says. "There's all different ways to do that, but the most extreme is to criminalize that

conduct. We have a tendency when we don't like something and want to discourage it, to make it a crime?

For example, Castelli says in Tennessee it's a crime to drive with a suspended license. He says in some cases it might be warranted, but in thousands of cases, people just can't afford to renew it. "So we criminalize that instead of finding a civil way to handle it."

Castelli also says "we're really bad at understanding motivations for criminal conduct like mental health or addiction,"

Typically, people in poverty have less access to health insurance and quality health care and are more susceptible to addiction and mental health issues, he says. This means they are also more likely to enter the system.

"Our criminal justice system is kind of a hammer," Castelli says, "The solution is you get tossed into the system. Sometimes that's the only way for people to actually get treatment."

Castelli says Tennessee should consider pre-booking diversion programs, which allow people to enter treatment programs to address mental health or addiction without "getting sucked into the whole court system." This is a way to address those underlying causes of criminal behavior before you get involved in the criminal justice system on an ongoing basis, Castelli says.
"We can do better at identifying

those causes before people are arrested," he says. "Instead of arresting them, get them in the programs trying to make an effort to address these issues. See if that works before we start using criminal laws as the cure-all."

SYSTEM OVERHAUL

Addressing the various issues with the criminal justice system will take a holistic approach, Castelli says. "Multiple things need to be fixed. Some things need to be scrapped and reinvented. It'll take a lot of laws;

Castelli says there are "a lot of moving parts" in the criminal justice "There's no one part we can fix and say, 'There, it's done,' Some of it goes beyond the justice and legal system and relates to public health and wealth equity."

There is a role for every level of

government to play in addressing the issues, he says, but the "heaviest lift lies with the state." Local governments can do certain things like diversion programs, while the federal government can provide funding or create initiatives affecting federal criminal law.

"The state sets the majority of the criminal laws and what the punishments for them are," he says. "They're the ones who authorize these fees and costs. It's a state law that takes away drivers licenses, sets fees for appointed counsel, and takes away

people's voting rights. These are all fixes that have to come from the state.

Castelli says with Tennessee Governor Bill Lucentering his second year in office, "it will be interesting to see whether the governor has any initiatives to address some of these issues

In May, the governor, who has been vocal about criminal justice reform, signed a law removing the fee for eaoffenders to have their criminal record expunged. Lee said last month the move is an effort to remove the barriers to finding employment many face upon

"We need to remove those obstacles for those who've served their sentences and paid the price for their crime," Lee said. "We need to remove obstacles to make it easier for them to re-enter, I think anything we can do to remove a barrier for someone who has re-entered or is in the process of working, trying to get their feet back under them, trying to be a taxpayer, instead of a tax taker, we improve their success rate. and expungement fee reductions will improve that process," Lee's office did not respond to the Flyer's inquiry for additional comment

"At the end of the day, what we're doing is taking away someone's liberty,"
Castelli says, "The most crucial civil right you have is your liberty and your right to live free and not be incarcerated. The consequences are huge."

Takin' it to the stage



Memphis Police Department officer Kelly Bowen (left) and Lifeline To Success program participant Andriell Winston embrace during a dramatic improve sation session of Playback Memphis at First Congregational Church. The program aims to break down barriers while building trust and understanding.

Peaceful Performance { SPOTLIGHT By Binneu Phillips

Police officers and ex-offenders will work together to help at-risk Frayser youth.

Pelons and police officers may seem like especially strange bedfellows, but a Memphis theater troupe has built a bridge between some who enforce the law and some who have broken it.

And now those groups are planning to join together to help kids in Frayser stay out of trouble.

Last fall, Playback Memphis, an improv troupe that uses theater to promote healing and reconciliation, paired a group of five Memphis police officers with six ex-offenders from LifeLine to Success, a ministry that helps felons turn their lives around and re-enter society.

"In the Playback method, someone shares a reflection or observation or personal story. We have a team of actors and a musician, and we bring those stories to life on the spot using music and metaphor," said Playback Memphis Director Virginia Murphy.

The group met for 10 weeks and shared personal stories from their lives. Playback Memphis members taught the participants how to use improv to act out

"We listened to ex-offenders tell stories of their childhoods, about growing up in difficult situations. And a lot of the officers had those very same stories, including myself, growing up in a home with domestic violence," said Memphis Police Officer loy Knowlton, "The only difference between us is some of us turned right and some of us turned left."

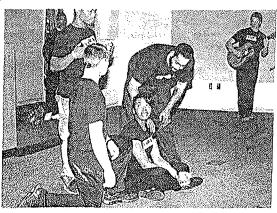
In the end, friendships were formed, and any distrust between the two groups

"Our clients found a way to express themselves that they didn't even know existed. It allowed them to remove a lot of stress and reveal some their experiences," said LifeLine to Success Executive Director DeAndre Brown. "Doing that with police officers made it even better. We had those people who used to run from police, and to be able to meet with them every week on purpose was a big deal."

The group of police officers and felons acted out some of their stories for the public in a performance in early December. But the work didn't stop there. Murphy's goal, in getting the two unlikely allies together, was to get them to assist in Playback's plan to work with troubled youth in Frayser.

We wanted to do a project where police and ex-offenders could come together, and if you could break down barriers and bring some healing and transformation between those two groups who we typically don't think of as having harmonious relationships, they can go out and have an impact on young people," Murphy said. "They will have a reach Playback wouldn't have on its own!

Playback runs an anti-bullying program called Be the Peace in area schools.



Memphis Police Officer Joy Knowlton (center) acts out a personal story with fellow officers and ex-offenders from LifeLine to Success.

And they hope to establish it in the Achievement School District in Frayser soon. When they do, the police officers and ex-offenders who participated in the fall session will join them in that work.

"We want to take the Playback model into the schools in our neighborhood to help children use conflict resolution skills," Brown said, "We have identified a Frayser Success Zone around the elementary school across the street and the high school across the street."

In addition to helping Frayser kids, Knowlton said she hopes the Playback model may eventually expand within the police department.

"This needs to be an experience for every officer, I would like to see the (Memphis police) training academy give officers a chance to see Playback to help officers touch back with their roots and remember why they chose this career." Knowlton said. "For me, [Playback offered] a reminder of why I chose to be a police officer and give back to the community." =

Ban the Box Campaign Offers Employment Hope to Ex-Prisoners - Prison Fellowship

BAN THE BOX CAMPAIGN OFFERS EMPLOYMENT HOPE TO FX-PRISONERS

As a successful commodities broker, Jake Hall made a good living. After spending time in prison, though, he couldn't even get a job washing dishes. He filled out innumerable applications, but when employers saw the checked felony box, they would tell him "no thanks," or simply throw the application away.

As a successful commodities broker, Jake Hall made a good living. After spending time in prison, though, he couldn't even get a job washing dishes. He filled out innumerable applications, but when employers saw the checked felony box, they would tell him "no thanks," or simply throw the application away.

Nearly 700,000 people are released from state and federal prisons every year. One year after release, only 37 percent have a full-time job, and most of those earn a lower hourly wage than they did before incarceration. according to the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center. The checkboxes for felony convictions that appear on many low-wage job applications are emblematic of the obstacles facing ex-prisoners in today's highly competitive job market. Many employers—formally or informally—embrace policies to automatically disqualify those who check the box, leaving few legitimate options for a population vulnerable to recidivism.

A campaign to "ban the box" has arisen in the prisoner reentry community. Its proponents argue that ex-prisoners deserve a fair evaluation of their qualifications for a job. While job applicants with histories of incarceration would still be subject to appropriate background checks and disclosure requirements, the removal of the box would give them a chance to make a good first impression and explain their past—an opportunity usually denied to them.

In Memphis, Tennessee, as in other cities across the nation, a Ban the Box initiative was recently introduced to the city council. In support of the measure to help ex-prisoners obtain work and avoid crime, Prison Fellowship (index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=37&Itemid=1) assisted a local Memphis advocate and former prisoner, DeAndre Brown.

DEANDRE'S JOURNEY

DeAndre Brown was accepted to Rhodes College near Memphis, Tennessee, on a full-ride academic scholarship in 1994. He planned to become a doctor. But over time, he realized the sacrifices that would accompany his dream: years of schooling and large amounts of debt. Instead, he decided he wanted a life like the other young men in his neighborhood—men with lots of disposable cash, often gained through the sale of drugs. DeAndre's own illicit activities led to incarceration at age 28. After his release, he says, "It was very hard." He could not secure a job because of his record. "I can't say that I've never had the desire to go back [to illegal ways]," he remembers, because he knew he could make money that way. But he "didn't let the desire take [him] under."

After a couple of months without a job, DeAndre and his wife started their own janitorial company in an attempt to bring in a paycheck. Shortly after, they won a large contract with a local hospital.

But, "when [the hospital] found out I had a felony conviction on my background," recalls DeAndre, "I had to turn in my keys that very day. I was no longer welcome on the premises ... even though I had put in almost two years." Three months after the discovery, the hospital officially terminated the contract with DeAndre's company.

Then, almost two years ago, DeAndre heard Prison Fellowship Founder <u>Chuck Colson (chuck-colson-bio&catid=47)</u> on the radio talking about getting involved with prison ministry. DeAndre had long had the desire to minister to prisoners, but until then he didn't know where to start. He and his wife soon became certified Prison Fellowship volunteers and played an active role in Tennessee's 2010 Out4Life Conference (index.php? option=com_content&view=article&id=13353&Itemid=757), a collaboration of regional community-based reentry efforts.

In 2009 DeAndre opened a nonprofit called Lifeline to Success (https://www.lifeline2success.org/), helping exprisoners—or "clients," as he prefers to call them—get job training and life skills. But, when his first six clients were rejected by a Memphis Library-sponsored employment aid agency due to their criminal records, they ret 🔞 🖰 🖽 🤫 office defeated. That's when DeAndre decided to take the issue to city hall.

Ban the Box Campaign Offers Employment Hope to Ex-Prisoners - Prison Fellowship

BATTLE IN MEMPHIS

At the next city council meeting, several of DeAndre's clients explained their reentry struggles. DeAndre challenged the council to lead the effort to ban the box on applications for city jobs, to show the business community that exprisoners are worthy job applicants, too. "We want to change perceptions," DeAndre explained to them,

To DeAndre's surprise, the council favored his plan to ban the box, admitting that it is the responsibility of elected officials to stand behind such efforts. They realized that prisoners without hope of a job oftentimes end up back behind bars because they run out of options. By promoting access to jobs for ex-prisoners, the city could promote their rehabilitation.

Local media, however, cast a shadow on the proceedings. Print and online discussions used such derogatory terms as "ex-cons," and raised questions beyond the intent or specificity of the legislation. "Should violent offenders take city jobs?" one radio announcer even asked, adversely changing the entire tone of the conversation.

But rather than dwelling on media pessimism, DeAndre determined to focus his efforts on persuading the decision makers. Prison Fellowship assisted DeAndre in his presentation to the Memphis city council, providing statistical analysis and research showing the importance of jobs for ex-prisoners. Pat Nolan (pat-nolanbio&catid=47&Itemid=125), the vice president over Prison Fellowship's justice reform efforts, wrote a letter in support of the measure. In the end, the council passed the measure by a vote of 9-2.

FUTURE OF BAN THE BOX

The victory in Memphis is an important first step.

Legislation banning the box for both the public and private sectors has already been passed in states such as Hawaii and Massachusetts, while New Mexico, Connecticut, and Minnesota have banned the box for public employers. In addition, smaller jurisdictions have banned the box, including Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. Legislation is still pending in California, Maryland, Nebraska, and Wisconsin, among others.

DeAndre hopes that Ban the Box will move to the state level and eventually become a national movement. "It's important," he adds, "because it gives [ex-prisoners] hope. The hope is what gives them the desire to do better."

EMPLOYMENT (https://www.prisonfollowship.org/employment) PRIVACY (/sito/resources/privacy-policy) © 2021 PRISON FELLOWSHIP® CONTACT US (/site/resources/contact/)
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Angel Tree Camping, Angel Tree Sports Clinic Angel Tree Sports Camps, and Worden Exchange are programs of Prison Fellowship.

sation session of Playback Memphis at First Congregational Church. The program aims to break down barriers while building trust and understanding.

A little drama helps cops, ex-offenders bridge gaps

The 12 of them were brought together, reluctantly, a few weeks after two events that have come to define their stark and separate realities.

The fatal shooting of a young black man by a police officer. The fatal shooting of a police officer by a young black man.

"I don't like to talk about my business," said one of the six ex-offenders who entered the collaboration uneasily. "Every time I get pulled over and I see a police officer, guns drawn, I know we're gonna fight, if he

starts messin' with me. I gotta be ready to fight."

Some heads

Some heads nodded. Others were still.

"I just know them as criminals, people we put behind

bars," said one of the six police officers who entered the collaboration warily. "They keep getting out and we keep having to put them back in, I'm hesitant to meet these people. I might have to arrest them one day, I don't want to get to know

DAVID

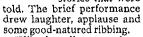
WATERS

COLUMNIST

them."

It's hard not to get to know someone when you're involved in Playback Memphis, an improvisational theater company and improbable community therapy program.

Within minutes of that exchange, two members of each group were pairing up to enact — with mime, rhyme and repetition — the conflicting feelings they heard in the stories that were



"I like the police now, at least you all ones in here," said one of the ex-offenders.

"You like us, but do you love us?" an officer responded.



Participants including (from top left) MPD Officer Marico Flake, Playback co-facilitator Glovanna Lopez, and Lifeline to Success members Lakita Dickerson and Clayborne Taylor act out an improvisation scene.

"Let's hug this out," said another officer.

They didn't hug it out, but over the course of several weeks and a dozen two-hour sessions, they did their best to work out whatever awkwardness, anxiety and anger they were feeling among themselves and toward each other. In the process, they got to know, like and trust each other.

and trust each other.

This is "Performing the Peace," a collaboration among the Memphis Police Department, the Lifeline to Success re-entry program, the University of Memphis, and Playback Memphis.

Virginia Murphy, Playback's co-founder and executive director, calls it a form of non-

violent resistance.

"Resistance to cynicism, fear, despair, mistrust that we have in our community," said Murphy, a native Memphian who co-facilitates the group with Giovanna Lopez, "What happens in Playback is that people become human to each other."

In their private sessions, the officers and Lifeline members told stories and then took turns acting them out together.

acting them out together.

The Lifeliners told stories of abusive parents; seeing family members or friends killed; struggling with addiction and unemployment; fearing and hating the police; being forever

See WATERS, 68

unpact on rumbion

WATERS from 18

maligned and thwarted for their worst decision.

They talked about knowing who always has a gun but not knowing who will use one.

The officers told stories of angry young men; the numbing routine — and yet constant sense of responsibility and danger—in answering call after call; struggling with anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress; being forever maligned and thwarted for another officer's worst decision.

3)

They talked about not knowing who has a gun and knowing anyone might use one.

Both groups said the experience was cathartic, even therapeutic.

"After one scene, one of the Lifeline men said it took him back to when he was a child, before he'd done anything wrong," Murphy said.

Officer Joy Knowlton, a 14-year MPD veteran who helped Murphy coordinate the program, said it helped remind her why she became a police officer.

"I was in the middle of a lot of domestic violence when I was a kid," Knowlton said. "The only time I felt safe was when a certain female police officer answered the call."

Dr. Robert Niemeyer, a psychology professor at the University of Memphis, calls it social therapy.

"We all need to be heard and understood," Niemeyer said. "Playback breaks down the barriers that keep as isolated from each other, it develops trust and empathy for each other."

neits the program on behalf of the U of M's Strengthening Communities Initiative. He has seen dramatic increases in both groups' levels of "allophilia" — fik-

ing and respecting others.

Pastor DeAndre Brown, Lifeline's executive director, has seen it, too. "Our men and women now see police officers as people. They now respect the sacrifices and the dangers that our officers face."

Murphy hopes to continue the program and eventually bring the performers into schools and other community settings.

Meanwhile, participants will be "Performing the Peace" in public for the first time at a sold-out show Saturday evening.

"I didn't want to do it at first," said Officer Kelly Bowen. "I was suspicious, but once I got into it I could feel the stress coming off me. Now I know everyone has a story, a family, a history. It's not 'them' anymore. It's us. We know each other."

Lakita Dickerson, a Lifeline member, said she feels the same way. "I thought mostly all

"I thought mostly all police were the same," she said, "Now I know them as people, I know their names and see their faces. I have more respect for them. This will probably save someone's life.

Contact columnist David Waters at waters@commercialappeal.



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September 16, 2011 4:24 PM

Frayser Fights Back Against Latest Murder

by Lindsay Jones

Print



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Document 1-4

PageID 51

THE MEMOFEATURESASK VANCEFOODTRAVELHABITATS CULTURE HEALTH FICTION BUSINESS WHO'S V

of a mind in the face of loss? For Mae Smith, whose 32-year-old son was shot dead Tuesday in Frayser, it's neither. Resignation is all she has now besides friends, family, and unsettled neighbors.

"I'm angry, but it's not a hostile anger," Smith said today at a community rally. "I just want the judge to know not to send [the killer] out onto the streets. I don't want another mother to feel this way."

Her son, Antoine Farris, himself the father of nine children, was working as a barber at Black's Exclusive Cuts & Design on Frayser Boulevard when someone started chasing him Tuesday. He ran around the block and later was found dead. His mother got the dreaded call from her sister around 2:30 in the afternoon that day. Smith said she suspects a neighborhood kid who's already been to jail for shooting someone -- for doing what she called "stupid stuff."

Her son, whom she says was well liked in the area, hadn't been feuding with anyone in particular. "I don't know of him having any enemies," she said.

In response to the crime, which is still being investigated, several ministers and community groups assembled today at the corner of Mountain Terrace and Frayser Boulevard to voice their concerns. They were positioned a few blocks from Trezevant High School and wanted to greet students as they walked home. Many of those same teens have had to traipse past the nearby crime scene since Antoine's death.

Frayser Fights Back Against Latest Murder - Memphis magazine

THE MEMOFEATURESASK VANCEFOODTRAVELHABITATS CULTURE HEALTH FICTION BUSINESS WHO'S V

scene a scene of hope," said DeAndre Brown, executive director of Lifeline to Success, a nonprofit organization that helps ex-offenders transition from jail to society.

But once the hoopla died down, once the crowds dispersed and the newspeople moved on to the next tragedy, Mae Smith and her husband, George Farris, were still left to grieve. So was their daughter-in-law, Tamika.

"I don't only want [the perpetrator] to know they took a son, but they took a father too," she said, with tear tracks on her cheeks.

She and Antoine have a 5-year-old daughter. His other children are from previous relationships. But they're all close. And, now, fatherless.

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by Lindsay Jones September 16, 2011 4:24 PM

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GREEN GROWTH FOR LOCAL BIZ

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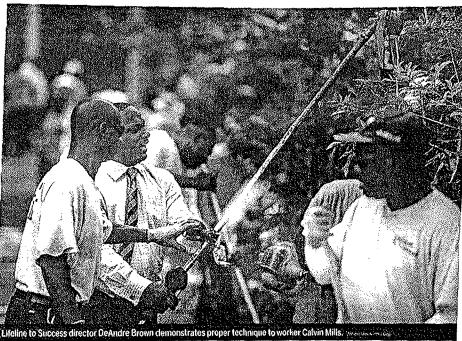
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18 September 20-26, 2013

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COVER STORY



CLEANUP CR

Program puts ex-offenders to work while fighting Frayser blight

Bill Dries mos zworylisbautumoer@zzwiski

eAndre Brown runs what might be the best known landscane business in areas of Memphis where the yards have brush and trees tailer than the vacant houses they completely obscure.
"We operate a little differently

than other contractors. Most have subcontractors that work separately," he said, "We are one large erew of 60 men or women. We get the heavy equipment in first.
Then a team of wood eaters will go in behind that, then a team of people go in behind them and clean up.

The Blight Potrol, composed of men and women wearing lime green T-shirts, has become synonymous with the larger of fort to bring Frayser back after decades of indifference, neglect, and lots of ussumptions about the blue col-lar suburb that lost its factories starting in the purly 1980s

cluding brown, are all ex-offendars, people who in Brown's words "have had some contact with the

eriminal justice system." And the patrol is part a jurger program called Lifeliau to Success, which is focused on more than re-entry after completion of a prison term, In the July beat, the Blight Patrol can look like a chain gang

without the chains if you know the men and women at work used to be in prison. The yard nlight billiof weathers he work however was the only his . .

enus Brown could find for a goal that is about more than the rehabilitation of ex-felons. It turned out to be a near perfect union.

When he and six other ex-felons showed at a Memphis City Council session three years ago they were interested in not only changing the attitude of those released from prison - they were vocal, even angry, about changing the way those who hadn't been in prison viewed those energing from prison. They spoke at the end of the council session a City Hall, the spot on the agenda reserved for citizens who aren't supaking about anything on the council's agenda. And they left as frustrated as, if not more than,

they were when they got there, Sometime after that, Brown found his way to the Frayser Ex-change Club's weekly luncheous near the intersection of U.S. 51 and North Warkins Brad.

"The Issue at the Exchange Club meeting that day was some houses that were vacant that no one would cover," Brown sold,
"We said, 'You know what? Let us

Lifeline began its work in the Schoolfield area of Fmyser two days a week,

They embraced our men and women without worrying about their history," Brown said of the club, "That was something that was important to me. And Prayser had the most overgrown lots. So it worked out."

Brown also started bringing those working in the crews to the luncheon as well, as part of their adjustment to life on the outide. The encounters are almost always turnative with those in the green shirts always more tentative than others at the luncheon.

"We wanted to have a way to get them into the public," he said. "Our mission is to change perceptions. The only way we can do that is to be in public doing things that the community sees value in."

Most in the crowded back-

room of Samh Lee's restaurant know the men and women in green are ex-felous. But that recognized for clearing lots and yards that many of those in the

Exchange Club drive by every d.

What can seem like anger on the part of those in Lifeling isn't lost auger, Brown sald, And starting to change that is what happens for two weeks in a class room setting, then the classroon and volunteer efforts and then noon to dask clearing lots,

"One of the most frustrating things is to deal with someone who's been in that situation because they don't feel there is my hope," Brown said. "Prison hardens you. I don't think tolks really understand what that means. It isn't somebody who doesn't enre. It's someone who has had to learn how to deal with situation that they have no contral over They suppress emotions and suppress different feelings that normal people actually go through in a daily cycle. So they come out like they don't feet like they are strong,"

The adjustment is difficult and first tries frequently (ail.

Since Brown started the pro gram, he's counseled 1,100 men and women coming out of the criminal justice system, helerals are by word of mouth. He is the first to admit that most do not complete the program. Many leave of their own accord.

"Many of them don't complete the program because our program is very vigorous. It takes a special person that really wants to change. We've made it tough on purpose," Brown wid. "Generally with programs like this, people come in and they feel entitled. They are tooking far a handout, ... We make them work and earn It, Generally when you put the work in front of people that only want a handout. They

don't stand up to it."

Brown's philosophy is that the door is always open for them to return and complete the pro-

"it's very difficult to get put out of our program. People use that as an excuse and a cruch "! don't have to try anymore," he sidd. "We won't put you out, if you come back we will give you some restrictions but you can still stay in the program."

Law enforcement leaders and others in the local criminal Justice system are starting to question whether the difficult transition back from incarcum-tion to a life on the right side of the law is a fourney so many here and elsewhere undergo.

"The explosion in the Ameri-can criminal justice system over the last 40 years in unprecedent ed anywhere in the world," said Shelby County Public Defender Stephen Bush, "We incorrected 25 percent of the people who are incorcerated throughout the world even though we only have five percent of the world's population. No one's even close to what we have dono."

lames Coleman, director of Shelby County Corrections Diviwww.liememplalsnews.com September 26-26, 2013-49

-When you think about the empose of a prison. We are lookpurpose to person in hopefully to offer him or her services that silthelp them he better when parison in and once they leave they are really in worse shape,

decis a problem there."

Coleman's programs at the corrections center including usining in how to operate a forkfiland this year he estimates 120 paparents you be estimated (20 ionates will earn their equivalent of a high school diploma. But vening a job right out of prison for many of those intriates will be short process because they will litely be disqualified as soon an employer sees they have checked the box on the application indica-tion that they have been convict-Mofa felony -- any felony: He is an advocate of "ban

the box," the initiative that takes such a box off job applications and puts the issue later in the job inserviewing process.

You get to meet me as a person and then we talk about the incoveration," Coleman said. We are trying to do some things to not get on an even keel – to adastget them on the playing

Bown has a working philosophy that is closer to the clay-tridaylife of men and women after they leave prison. It is almun Sanething as simple as yord

"When we began to actually get in the neighborhood and cut grass, all of a sudden doors began to open." Brown said. "We could find a need and we didn't have to talk about it. We could actually address it. And when people saw that we could address something that was of concern, things began to change for us."

And interaction with those who haven't been to prison is essential to the success of what Lifeting is trying to do for those on both sides of the encounter,

"We've become an asset. People actually seek as out," he said, "So, where a man was one a pariah and no one wanted him in the neighborhood, now they see him on the learn and they are excited - especially when the grass starts to grow,"

Frayser is more to the group than where the most overgrown lots are. Brown is an integral part of the area's comeback.

"We're ready to take back our neighborhoods and make Frayser the next Germantown," he told the Memphis City Council when he returned to City Hall in July 2012, this time to accept a proclamation from the council.

Lifeline is also involved in the schools in the area, working with the Achievement School District.

When Tennessee Education Commissioner Keyln Huffman visited Whitney Achievement Elementary School this month,



Filed 07/14/25

brown was along for the tour, In the grade school's burch-

toom, his attention was leaute-diately drawn to the one child in the lunchroom sliting in a lone sout by the door - a decidedly door expression on his face, his arms crossed tightly across his

As the lunchroom emptied in orderly lines, Brown approached the child obviously serving the last part of his lunch period in

time out and talked with birn quietly. The boy's expression remained resolutely hard, or as hard as the stare of an elementory school student in a uniform can be. Brown recognized the look and kept talking, letting the words sink in even if it didn't lank

Bk6 they were getting very far.
"We're setting out to change
the culture of Frayser. It won't happen overnight. But if we can get that first or second grader

and teach them hav to respect nuthority, then be won't be walk-ling in the street or have his pants sagging." Brown said the next day. "If an adolt speaks to bim, he'll look blin in the eye and give them respect they deserve. That's how we begin to build it. it's always the troubled ones that need the



Paul Morris LLC Former Downtown leader

enters private sector. MIGHELLE CORGET, 4





DECEMBER 4-10, 2015

fron people.

community.

In felony convictions,

ods in generations.

Life on the outside

population.

That growth is even more pro-

Unemployment rates can be as high us 78 percent for those who are one year out of prison, according to the RIS. Add to that the fact that 25 percent of the African-American population now has a felony.
Consequently, with African Ameri-

nonneed in the African American

cans making up more than 63 percent of the Memphis population, the city's labor force - and overall economy - is desperately hamstrong by this growth

If the national statistics are applied to Memphis' total population of 656,000, more than 100,000 Memphians could potentially have a felony conviction impacting their job prospects.
The recent economic recession

pushed the city's unemployment rate to 12 percent, its highest level in 25 years

and one of the bleakest economic perf-

line for the area, meaning, unless some-

thing changes, Memphis is in danger of perpetual unemployment for a dou-

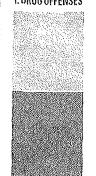
ble-digit percentage of its working-age

If felons continue to be unable to get opportunities to work, a high unem-ployment rate could become the base-

COVER STORY

For example, if the trend does not FELONY DEFENDANTS IN THE 75 LARGEST U.S. COUNTIES slow, 6.6 percent of all Americans born in 2001 will serve prison time. BY MOST SERIOUS ARREST CHARGE, 2009 In fact, from 1980 to 2008, the number of people incarcemted in America quadrupled - from 500,000 to 2.3 mil-

1. DRUG OFFENSES



Trafficking, 8, 287 Other drug offenses, 9.933 defendants

2. PROPERTY OFFENSES



- Motor vehicle theft, 1,439 Forgery, 1.458
- Fraud, 1,887 Diher property, 1,937
- @ Larcony/theft, 4,700 Burglary, 4,819 defendants

3. VIOLENT OFFENSES



- Murder, 374 @ Rape, 584
- @ Other violent offenses, 2,728
- Assault, 6,469 defendants

Source Russau of Austre Statistics

"Had I not experienced my life as it was, living through conviction and addiction, I would not see the world as I do now."

OLAYBORNE TAYLOS.
Memphymanumember of Ealertine to Buccess

It is difficult to determine exactly how

had the job picture is for felons, but a recent survey from the Soslety for Human Resources helps underscore the steep elimb felons must make to gain More than 23 percent of HR profes

sionals say they useer iminal background checks to weed out job candidates; just I percent said that a non-violent felony conviction would be "not very influential" in hiring decisions.

About 40 percent of employers sald they would "definitely" or "prohably" hire applicants with criminal records,

regardless of the severity of the crime.
At 52 years old, Memphian Clayborne Taylor has spent much of the last 30 years in and out of prison. Most of his time beltind bars was due to a longstanding drug problem, something Tay-for says he is now free of.

"I was in my late 20s when I first went in," Taylor says.

Though that was just a six-month sentence, Taylor's life spiraled down from that point.

The conviction made life unbearable, and, eventually, it led me to homelessness," he says.

Taylor mei DeAndre Brown in prison. They found each other through church fellowship, and they have connected on the outside at LifeLine.

to meet again here. This place has been a blessing for me," Taylor says, "Had I not experienced my life as it was, living through conviction and addiction. I would not see the world as I do now.

One thing is clear from Brown's group: The members have grown to care for each other. Many of the men and women at LifeLine have little or no family and feel abandoned by their

community.

Brown is working to build a home for felons looking for a second chance. There are many companies that do

hire felons. National chains such as Trader loc's, Pepsi Co. and Apple Inc. employ felons as part of their regular hiring strategies.

However, there remains a concern about public perception of hiring fel-ons. Two Memphis businesses who have had success hiring felons declined to comment for this article.

First steps to a second chance The Memphis and Shethy County Office of Re-entry (MSCOR) is a collaborative

"God saw it lit for [me and Brown] | effort between three agencies: the Shelby County Corrections Center, Second Chance and the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole.

MSCOR is a first step for those attempting to put their professional lives back together after getting out of prison, and it helps connect employers who are willing to hire felons and pro-

vides job training.
One MSCOR program works with inmates before their release from prison to define their needs and connect them with resources. Some prisoners have been able to move directly from prison nto apprenticeships at local businesses.

Still, the problem is huge. About 7,000 people are released from prison in Shelby County each year, and MSCOR says it had about 700 people pass through its office over the first half of 2015.

Many of the rest of those released simply melt back into society with a massive black mark on their record limiting their job prospects.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

OFFEHSES

TYPES OF

4. PUBLIC-ORDER OFFENSES



- Wespons, 2.052
- Orlving-related, 2,324
- Other public-order
- offenses, 3.128 defendants

- RACE OF DEFENDANTS



- D Black/African American, 45%
- ♥ White, 30%
- Hispanic/Latino, 24%
- O Other, 2%

CARTOPIDE ENDANGE

68%

of convicted felons ogs 40 or older had at least one prior felony conviction, 2009

45%

of convicted falons age 40 or older had at least one prior falony conviction, 1990

34%

of state prison innuites were age 40 or older by 2009

Source: Bureau of Array Statistics

MEMPHIS BUSINESS JOURNAL

COVER STORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

A Just city?

Advocating for those who fall through the eracks is part of the mission of the recently formed Memphis advocacy organization has City, headed up by executive director losh Spickier, a former public defender. The organization helps, give voice to the problems faced by the Shelby County Public Defender's Office and its clients.

Overtaxed public defenders may be one of the reasons the Increase in Flony convections has grown so much. Public defenders often don't have long to meet their client and understand their situation before seeing a fulfie.

tion before seeing a fudge. And It's not uncommon for Individuals to languish in Jall for weeks or months simply waiting for the opportunity to see a judge. The BJS says that about time in 10 detailed defendants had a ball amount set but were unable to pay it. It is not uncommon for clients unable to make hond to plead guilty simply to get out of Jail.

"There are a very different set of choices for a client who can't afford a \$500 bond," Spickler says, The problem has become so large in

The problem has become so large In New Orleans that Orleans Parish public defenders recently asked a judge to stop assigning them any more cases, saying they could not continue without some relief.

Though Memphis' public defender's office isn't in the state that New Orleans' is in, Spickler says that the office

is, the most across the nation, under immense pressure. That can often lead to guilty pleas.

PageID 57

Just City also assists felous in trying to expunge their records, a relatively costly endeavor that wipes the slate clean and allows felous to more easily get a job or tent an apartment.

Banning the box

There has been political momentum building over the so called "Bau the Box" movement. "The Box" in question is the spot on most job applications that asks if the applicant has a felony conviction.

According to the National Engloyment Law Project, more than 100 municipalities nationwide have removed the question from Job applications, including the City of Memphis. Nashville followed suit in November. In aspecch to the Philadelphia NAACP

In a speech to the Philadelphia NAACP in July President Runck Obaman Implored printe employers to eliminate the eriminal history question from their applications. In early November, the President signed an executive order barming the question from Redeml Job applications.

By banning the question of felony convictions from job applications, qualified applicants should have a better chance of getting to the interview phase, something advocares say is critical to improving the felon employment situation in Memphis.

Though there are signs of progress, it's not ensy for the individuals at Life-Line to see it. Up until earlier this year, Life-Line had a public works contract with the City of Memphis to mow and



ELLEN COTTIER I

clean up vacant lots.

But, budgetary constraints ended it, and work has been snoradie

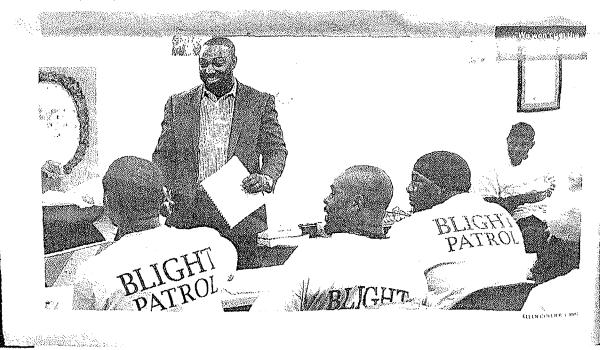
and work has been sporadic.

Like the members of LifeLine, Memphis needs a fresh start so it can get back to work. Otherwise, the city will continue to pay economically for the problems of the past, and efforts will be made to alleviate the symptoms rather than the

underlying causes of the issues. But, at LifeLius, members say they're

committed to both the program and the group as a whole.

At the end of its meetings, the group stands together and delivers a mortofor moving on: "I am not my crime, I am not my past, I am new, God loves me, I love me, I will succeed."



exfelons-prove-value-to-city-and-themselves

commercial appeal

DAVID WATERS

Ex-felons prove value to city and themselves

David Waters The Commercial Appeal

Published 1:49 p.m. CT May 18, 2016

My wife doesn't think a car needs gas until the gauge is below E.

So on her way home from school one night, as the needle was about to drop off the gauge, she stopped for gas. It was winter. It was dark. She was alone. She was in Frayser.

She wasn't particularly worried. She has taught in South Memphis, North Memphis, Frayser and Binghamton. She's never had a problem. She lets her husband do all the worrying.

Still, she was relieved when she saw a small group of black men, all ex-cons, gassing up their truck. They all were wearing lime green 'Blight Patrol' T-shirts.

I am a success

I matter

The Blight Patrol, a product of Rev. DeAndre Brown's Lifeline to Success re-entry program for ex-offenders, has become a blessing to all of Memphis.

The City Council recognized this Tuesday when they approved member Joe Brown's motion to double the budget-strained city's annual allocation to Lifeline from \$100,000 to \$200,000.

'People have got to realize what this organization does,' Brown told his fellow council members.

What this organization does is work to solve some of the city's biggest woes: Crime, blight, violence, joblessness, and other aspects of what Rev. Brown calls 'criminal culture.'

I am important

I am somebody special

https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/news/columnists/david-waters/2018/05/18/exfelons-prove-value-to-city-and-themselves/90535722/

exfelons-prove-value-to-city-and-themselves

Lifeline currently enrolls, trains and employs 41 ex-offenders. Every workday begins at 9 a.m. with a two-hour life-skills class that is part Bible study, part motivational seminar.

Document 1-4

PageID 59

'People don't care what you say, they care what you do,' Brown told his lime-green clad recruits Wednesday morning, 'And they care what other people say you can do. Who vouches for you.

When you get a high school diploma, the state is vouching for you. When I first went to the City Council six years ago, I didn't ask for any money. I just asked them to give us a chance, to vouch for us.'

They did. Six years later, they are doubling down.

Brown spent 25 months in state and federal prisons for identify theft and bank fraud about 15 years ago. He believes crime isn't a byproduct of poverty but rather a product of a criminal culture. He doesn't just recruit ex-offenders; he goes after current ones.

'I convinced the neighborhood dope dealer that it makes sense for him to cut grass,' Brown said, nodding at one of the class members.

'It's so simple, it's hard. Our job is to create a different culture here. We're not dumb. We've been committed to the wrong things.'

I am loved

I am needed

Rev. Brown, his wife, Vinessa Brown, and his fellow ex-offenders are seen everywhere and often in Frayser, not to mention other neighborhoods throughout the city.

They work with the city, county and school districts to clear and clean blighted properties, school yards, walkways and rights of way.

They work with Clean Memphis, Just City, the Frayser Exchange Club and other local nonprofits. They help elderly homeowners, overworked teachers and stressed police officers.

They show up at crime scenes and replace blue lights and police tape with bounce houses and picnic food for kids - to offer moral support and an alternative lifestyle.

'Lifeline has developed a very successful model for reentry that treats its participants with respect and rewards them with the dignity of work,' said Josh Spickler, Just City's executive director.

exfelons-prove-value-to-city-and-themselves

I am NOT my crime

I am NOT my past

Every life-skills session begins with prayer and includes a discussion of scripture. Wednesday, it was Deuteronomy 28: 'If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands ... You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.'

Brown said someone at City Hall sent him that verse after Tuesday's budget meeting.

'This didn't happen because I'm so smart or because you work so hard,' Brown told Lifeline members. 'There are many people smarter than me, and a few folks who work even harder than you. The Lord has blessed us because we are being faithful to his commands.'

I am new

God loves me

Every workday session ends when Brown and his fellow former felons rise and recite the toverse Lifeline creed.

It's the same creed my wife heard them recite to an auditorium full of children, who were looking up at the lime-green Lifeliners in wonder and awe.

I am a positive role model

I will succeed.

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Contact columnist David Waters at waters@commercialappeal.com.

memphis-fathers-march-against-violence

commercial appeal

NEWS

Memphis fathers march against violence

Kayleigh Skinner The Commercial Appeal Published 12:24 p.m. CT Jun. 18, 2016



June 18, 2016 — Dozens of fathers and supporters marched on Beale Street during the 1,000 Fathers March. Pastor DeAndre Brown, executive director of LifeLine to Success, organized the march in honor of Father's Day and to honor slain officer Verdell Smith. (Brad Vest/The Commercial Appeal) (Photo: (Brad Vest/The Commercial Appeal)

Justin Crutcher brought his three sons with him to Robert R. Church Park Saturday morning to show them they can take action against the violence plaguing their city.

Memphis police 'can only do so much, and we definitely need the community and our nonprofit organizations to come together to help try to reduce the crime here in Memphis,' Crutcher, a police officer, said. 'This definitely will teach them a lesson that violence is wrong and we don't want violence in our community.'

The family joined dozens of other men and women in the inaugural 1,000 Fathers March Downtown, organized by Lifeline to Success.

'We wanted to have an opportunity for fathers to come together in unity and celebrate Father's Day to build relationships so that we can begin to really fight our city's problems,' said DeAndre Brown, executive director. 'We have a large amount of violence that is just unnecessary, and I believe that through relationships we can begin to reduce that number.'

The march was organized as a response to the growing list of violent crimes in Memphis this year; more than 100 homicides have been recorded so far. Several incidents shook the city,

https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/news/2016/06/18/memphis-fathers-march-against-violence/90566084/

memphis-fathers-march-against-violence

including a recent stampede on Beale Street sparked by what some thought were gunshots; the shooting death of 18-year-old Myneishia Johnson on Second Street across from the Flying Saucer; and the death of Memphis police officer Verdell Smith, who was struck by a car on Beale driven by a suspect fleeing after a triple shooting.

Document 1-4

PageID 62

Smith was honored as 'Father of the Year' at the event Saturday because he 'exemplified leadership, manhood and service, Brown said.

The group marched down Beale Street onto Riverside Drive before finishing at the FedEx Forum. Before the group began, several local politicians spoke to the marchers, encouraging fathers to stay involved in their children's lives.

There is no way no how that we can fix the ills that we face in our communities, in our nation, without fathers being present, Rep. Antonio Parkinson, D-Memphis, said. 'We have to pour into our children. We have to catch them before they become shooters.'

Rep. Larry Miller, D-Memphis, and Sen. Lee Harris, D-Memphis, also spoke.

'These people that are killing in Memphis, somewhere or another they're not getting the message, 'Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Memphis, said. 'The message here on Father's Day weekend (is) to tell people to tell their families and their children to do right.'

Marchers held up signs discouraging violence. One read 'Education is the key, stop the killing;' another man held up a sign that said 'I lost my son 7-19-12 by an AK 47.'

Like Crutcher, many men brought their children with them. One pushed his baby in a stroller alongside the group. Brown held hands with his daughters Jewel and Micah as the marchers traveled down various Downtown streets.

'Every step we take today is a step toward a brighter Memphis,' Brown said.

Frayser community rallies at latest homicide scene

commercial appeal

CRIME

Frayser community rallies at latest homicide scene

Yolanda Jones yolanda.jones@commercialappeal.com Published 2:22 p.m. CT Jan. 11, 2017 | Updated 4:34 p.m. CT Jan. 11, 2017

Over the last three years, Pastor DeAndre Brown and members of his mentoring group have gone to homicide scenes in Frayser to reclaim the location from violence.

"For the past three years we have been responding actively to murder scenes. We go out and have an instant block party, if possible, just to let the community know that it is safe. That it is not normal behavior, Brown said. "We refuse to accept this as normal."

Brown said his Lifeline to Success group stopped going to the crime scenes last year to see if anyone else in the Frayser community would step up and help.

When no one did, Wednesday Brown and his group were at the scene of the latest homicide in the city.

Brown organized an anti-violence rally outside Creative Cuts and Design, a Frayser barbershop where a 25-year-old man was shot and killed Tuesday when two men opened fire on the business shortly after 8 p.m.

Friends identified the man killed as Devario Burks.

Police said another man was also shot, but his condition was non-critical. Two other people were also in the business, but were not hit by gunfire.

No arrests have been made, and as police continue to search for the suspects, Brown implored the community to do more.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing," Brown said.

He urged residents to be visible in their communities, mentor youth and "if you see something, say something."

Freyser community relies at latest homicide scene

"Good citizens are good neighbors and we watch out for each other," Brown said. "Stop harboring evil. Stop being a part of the madness. Stop being a victim. Let's stop it."

Shelby County School Board Member Stephanie Love showed up to the rally to show support.

"When I heard about the shooting, I said 'not again' and 'why,' " Love said. "My son lives in this community, and I worry about him and this community."

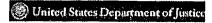
About 40 people turned out for the 11:30 a.m. rally in the parking lot of the barber shop at 2127 Frayser Blvd.

People left stuffed animals and cards on the porch of the barber shop in remembrance of the victim, Burks.

"He loved his family and was a good dude," said friend Gabrielle Cole.

8/2/2021

U.S. Attorney's Office Supports Local Non-Profit Organization through Reentry Outreach | USAD-ANDTN | Department of Justice



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

WESTERN DISTRICT of TENNESSEE

U.S. Attornevs » Western District of Tennessee » News

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

U.S. Attorney's Office Supports Local Non-Profit Organization through Reentry Outreach

Memphis, TN - As part of the reentry efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office, it is important for us to partner with and support agencies and initiatives that provide services to released felons in order to promote successful reintegration into society, employment opportunities, and the ability to lead productive, lawabiding lives. One of those organizations in the Memphis community is Lifeline to Success, led by Executive Director DeAndre D. Brown, Sr. The U.S. Attorney's Office partners with Lifeline to Success and Pastor Brown in several different reentry initiatives. For more information about the organization, please visit https://www.llfeline2success.org.

For the fourth year, Lifeline to Success is tearning up with Men's Wearhouse to sponsor and promote a suit donation drive, in order to provide suits for persons who may be in need of appropriate attire for job interviews, reintegration into social settings, and other opportunities after release from custody.

The U.S. Attorney's Office wants to encourage support for this program, and the attorneys and staff in our office are participating by donating several suits to the drive. We have also encouraged our partners in the Federal Reentry Council, made up of representatives from the Federal Public Defender's Office, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Probation Office, and U.S. Pre-trial Services Office to participate and donate to the suit drive.

U.S. Attorney D. Michael Dunavant said: "The mission of the Department of Justice is to reduce crime by using all available strategies and resources. One of the best ways to reduce recidivism is to provide meaningful support and resources to offenders upon release so that they will have the best chance of successful reentry into the community. The U.S. Attomey's Office for the Western District of Tennessee is committed to reentry programs that impact public safety in a positive way, and we hope that these suits will facilitate success for the reentrants."

Today, we invited Pastor DeAndre Brown and his Lifeline to Success team members to the U.S. Attorney's Office to collect the donated suits, to publicly highlight the program, and to challenge other professional offices across Memphis and Shelby County to support and donate to this worthy cause.

Component(s):

USAO - Tennessee, Western

Filed 07/14/25

7/16/2021

Healing Memphis one reenactment at a time | Waters

commercial appeal

DAVID WATERS

Healing Memphis one reenactment at a time | Waters

David Waters Faith in Memphis Published 7:00 a.m. CT Jan. 17, 2019

If Virginia Murphy has more faith in Memphis than many of us, it's because she has such faith in her fellow Memphians.

Why wouldn't she? She's spent the past 10 years asking police officers and ex-offenders, students and teachers, parents and children and anyone to share and express their deepest fears and joys -- in public, on a stage. And they do.

"Their commitment, their trust, their courage is so inspiring," Murphy said. "It's hard work but we all know how this is how we heal."

Murphy is co-founder and executive director of Playback Memphis, an improvisational theater company and improbable community therapy program.

Audience or group members tell stories of significant moments in their lives. The loss of a child. The saving of a life. An abuse, A diagnosis, A revelation. A joy.

Cast members then play it back, reenacting the stories on the spot, using mime, pantomime or other theatrical art forms.

Some call it art therapy. Dr. Robert Neimeyer, a psychology professor at the University of Memphis, calls it social therapy.

"We all need to be heard and understood," Neimeyer said. "Playback breaks down the barriers that keep us isolated from each other. It develops trust and empathy for each other."

Let's call it Memphis therapy.

Power of vulnerability

Virginia Reed Murphy grew up in Memphis, a child of privilege in a city plagued by poverty.

Healing Memphis one reenactment at a time I Waters

That didn't begin to dawn on her until she was in high school and some of her equally privileged classmates organized a fundraiser for their private school.

Document 1-4

PageID 67

"The idea was for students to auction each other off as 'slaves' for a day. Your 'slave' would carry your books or whatever," Murphy said. "For some reason it didn't occur to any of us how dreadful that was, especially in a culture built on racist ideology."

It did occur to one of her teachers.

"She was so distraught," Murphy said. "She just let us have it. She cried. She yelled. She was so angry and disappointed and it showed in every fiber of her being. I'd never seen an adult be so open and honest and vulnerable. It was overpowering."

Murphy went to college in Boston to become a special ed teacher. One day she watched a principal calm a big, troubled, angry student who seemed to be losing control. It was a performance she never forgot.

"That kid came out of the principal's office in a great mood," Murphy said. "The principal had his arm around the student's shoulders. They were smiling and laughing. It showed me the power of meeting opposition with humanity and relationship."

When she taught special education in San Francisco, her classroom became her first theater.

"I taught students who had been removed from the public school system for behavior problems," she said. "Many of them had been in the juvenile system, all had experienced complex trauma. It was my first exposure to using the arts as a medium for healing. And it was powerful."

Performing the Peace

Playback theater emerged out of a psycho drama conference in New York in the 1970's. Founder Jonathon Fox took playback to schools, prisons, nursing homes and other places to encourage people from all walks of life to let their stories be heard.

"We find out who we are by telling our stories," Fox wrote. "And as others bear witness and tell theirs in response, a deep and empathy-building conversation is created through our collective stories brought to the stage."

Murphy studied and performed Playback for 10 years, first in graduate school, then with the original theater company in New York City. She and her husband moved back to Memphis to be closer to family and brought Playback with them.

Healing Memphis one reenactment at a time | Waters

Their first performance, called Memphis Matters, debuted at TheatreSouth in 2009.

Playback's programs now include Performing the Peace, a collaboration between the Memphis Police Department and the Lifeline to Success re-entry program. The program has been so successful, it's been added to the training curriculum at the police academy.

Document 1-4

PageID 68

"From the newest recruits to the most senior leadership, Playback is now reaching all levels of the MPD," Neimeyer and psychologist Melissa A. Smigelsky concluded in their published study of Performing the Peace.

"This is perhaps the most advantageous structural change we could see in the effort to improve police-community relations. This project is a model that other communities can use to promote empathy, connection, and peacefulness."

Chris Street, who spent 20 years in the military and the past 15 with the MPD, said Playback has made him a better police officer and a better person.

"As a police officer, you see so much negativity, it's so easy to lose faith in humanity," Street said on the Just City podcast. "Before Playback, I was not nearly as open-minded as I am now. I engage people a lot differently. I raise my children differently now. I present myself at home differently."

Healing Memphis

Rev. DeAndre Brown, Lifeline's executive director, has seen Playback have the same effect on the ex-offenders in his program.

Playback is powerful because it allows people to see their own value by listening and playing back the stories of others," he said. "Our men and women now see police officers as people. They now respect the sacrifices and the dangers that our officers face."

Brown and his wife, Vinessa, have experienced Playback's healing power in their own lives.

When Vinessa was pregnant with their first child, she also was taking treatments for cancer. A few years later, their son was diagnosed with autism. She blamed herself.

"He would hit, cry, run away from teachers and family. I felt it was all my fault. Many nights I cried. He would sit under my arm hugging me and I couldn't help," Brown said.

"The playback of this story allowed me to focus on an awesome gift God gave me, and the talent that he has drawings). I was watching a part of my life. I could see the hurt, I could see

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Healing Memphis one reenactment at a time | Waters

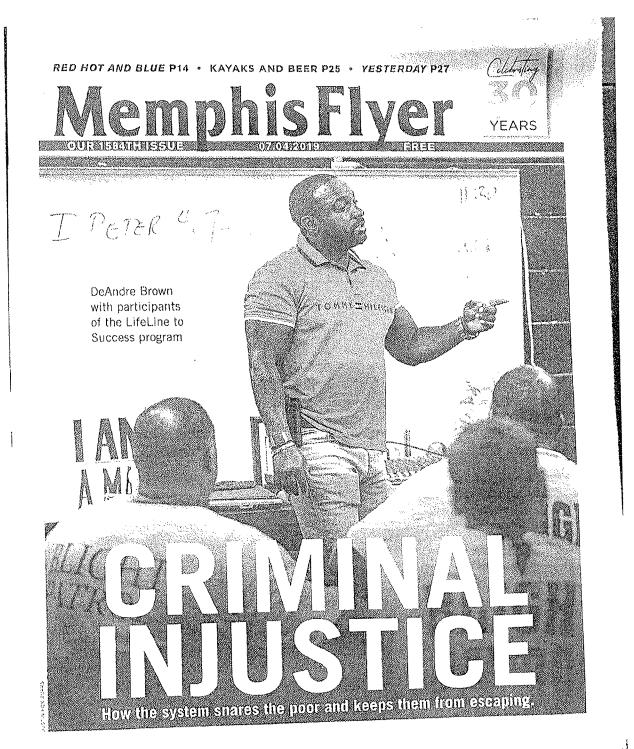
the support. It allowed me to open up and understand his needs to help him adjust to this world."

Playback Memphis, a nonprofit, now employs three staff members and 19 part-time cast members. In addition to Memphis Matters and Performing the Peace, the work includes Be the Peace!, an anti-bullying program for fifth-graders, and in Shelby County's Universal Parenting Places to raise awareness of adverse childhood experiences.

Psychologists call is drama therapy, or social therapy, or restorative retelling. Murphy likes to call Playback a form of nonviolent resistance.

"Resistance to cynicism, fear, despair, mistrust that we have in our community," she said.
"What happens in Playback is that people become human to each other and heal each other in the process."

31





Julia Baker covers criminal justice for The Daily Memphian. A lifelong Memphian, Julia graduated from the University of Memphis in 2021. Other publications and organizations she has written for include Chalkbeat, Memphis Flyer, Memphis Parent magazine and Memphis magazine.



District Attorney General

30th JUDICIAL DISTRICT ~ SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

201 Poplar Avenue, 11th Floor, Memphis, TN 38103-1947 Tel. 901-222-1300 ~ Fax 901-222-7971 www.scdag.com

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL

May 18, 2023

Document 1-4

PageID 72

The Honorable President Joe Biden The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N. W. Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As the District Attorney of Shelby County (Tennessee), I am writing to express my support for DeAndre Brown's application for a pardon. I have known Mr. Brown for several years—working with him in various capacities, specifically in his previous role as founder and executive director of Lifeline to Success and now as director of Shelby County's Office of Reentry. Mr. Brown has used the lessons he's learned from past mistakes to help others in similar positions. His work through Lifeline and the Office of Reentry is widely recognized in Memphis and Shelby County.

Under Mr. Brown's leadership, he has expanded programming for the Office of Reentry to now include more mental health assistance, job training, voting restoration, and family reconnection. In addition, Mr. Brown established in-prison training programs allowing inmates to learn valuable skills that may assist them in finding employment after release.

Through Lifeline, he has helped more than 1,600 former offenders by teaching work and life skills. The Lifeline program also provides job opportunities, allowing participants to give back to the community by performing landscaping and janitorial services as members of paid work crews or as volunteers. The organization has also worked with schools to offer after-school programs for at-risk youths.

Brown has impacted thousands of lives and continues to do so. Leadership like this is critical to help exoffenders enter back into society effectively. And through his personal story, Mr. Brown can connect with those he serves to prove what's possible.

As you consider a pardon, please refer to Mr. Brown's work, which provides a glimpse into his character. His determination to push past the effects of incarceration and embrace his second chance has been a testament to the countless number of lives he has impacted.

Sincerely,

District Attorney/General Shelby County, TN



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building 11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 15, 2022

Linda A. Moore Shelby County Government Communications Specialist Office: 901.222.2322

Mobile: 901.517.2969

SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS PROMOTES DEANDRE BROWN TO PERMANENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SHELBY COUNTY OFFICE OF REENTRY

DeAndre Brown has expanded existing programs and started new ones that help ex-offenders rebuild their lives after incarceration.



Shelby County, TN – Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris announces today, March 15, 2022, that DeAndre Brown, has been promoted to permanent executive director of the Shelby County Office of Reentry. Brown has served as interim executive director since August of 2021. Brown and his wife, Vinessa Brown, founded Lifeline to Success, a nonprofit organization for exoffenders, after his own incarceration and reentry.

> VASCO A. SMITH, JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 160 North Main Street, 11th Floor Memphis, TN 8103 901-222-2000 Fax 901-222-2005 www.shelbycountytn.gov



Since joining the Office of Reentry, Brown has expanded programming focused on the mental health of returning citizens. The office has hosted a job fair and block party that drew hundreds of visitors. He has extended the FOUSED program to include inmates with the Division of Corrections. FOCUSED is an 11-week program that combines job training with other assistance like family reconnection, financial literacy, and voting rights restoration. In addition, Brown has also established inside the prison training programs for janitorial work and the care of natural African American hair.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: "DeAndre Brown has shown that he is devoted to helping the formerly incarcerated turn their lives around. We had hoped his experience and connections to the community would help to grow the reentry programming, and, we were right."

Office of Reentry Executive Director DeAndre Brown: "I still don't believe this is happening. I am actually living the dream. I promise the citizens of Shelby County to use everything in me to make sure the men and women in this program have an opportunity to be successful when they return from prison."

The Shelby County Office of Reentry is located at 1362 Mississippi Blvd. It connects exoffenders to resources and employers willing to hire them. In addition to the FOCUSED program, there is technical and vocational training for small engine repair, construction, low voltage electrical apprenticeships, and forklift operation. Partners with the Office of Reentry include Southwest Tennessee Community College, HopeWorks, Alliance Healthcare Services, Christ Community Health Services, Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center, and Economic Opportunities.

For more information, visit <u>scofficeofreentry.com</u>.

(End of Release)



Source: Multiplying Good February 07, 2022 19:48 ET

Multiplying Good Announces TWELVE New Members Appointed to the **Board of Selectors**

New members will enhance board's focus on elevating the very best in America through the Jefferson Awards

PageID 75

NEW YORK, NY, Feb. 07, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Multiplying Good, the nation's leading nonprofit focused on fueling personal growth and leadership through public service, announced that twelve new members were appointed to its Board of Selectors in January 2022. The Board of Selectors, one of the most prestigious bodies of its kind, has leveraged members' diversity of experience, breadth of influence and commitment to excellence in their work to nominate and vote for national Jefferson Award recipients each year.

LARRY BLACKERBY, LA QUINTA, CA Larry Blackerby is a retired Emmy winning television executive with over 40 years of experience. Larry has managed TV stations all over the country with his most recent stops in Houston and Indianapolis, Larry began his involvement with Multiplying Good in 2000. He introduced the Jefferson Awards as a media sponsor in Palm Springs, CA, Houston, TX and Indianapolis, IN. He helped establish the Indiana Board for Multiplying Good where he served as a board member. Additionally, Larry created best practices for local Jefferson Award events, and has worked with staff to recruit other broadcasters nationwide to become media partners.

DEANDRE BROWN, MEMPHIS, TN A Memphis native, DeAndre brown split his time growing up between Memphis and rural Arkansas. A gifted student, he spent two years on a pre-med track at Rhodes before being lured by the easy money of being a career criminal. After nearly two years in prison, he learned about landscaping, found his faith, and became a "jailhouse preacher." A recipient of the national Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged in 2021, DeAndre Brown currently supports LifeLine to Success, a non-profit organization he founded with his wife and was recently named the Executive Director of the Shelby County, TN, Office of Reentry. In both roles, Brown works to find resources for former inmates and supports their transformation into assets for society, working to change negative perceptions that are commonly associated with a criminal record.

VIVIAN SCOTT CHEW, CLOSTER, NJ Vivian Scott Chew is undeniably a pioneering risk taker in every sense of the word. She stands as an innovative figure in the global music and entertainment industry with an accomplished history at ASCAP, Polygram Records and Sony Music. As Founder and Principal of TimeZone International - the first U.S. based African-American owned company that provides recording artists with international marketing and promotion services in expanded regions. Alongside her husband, Music Director and Producer, Ray Chew, Vivian is a founding partner in Chew Entertainment - a premiere event production firm. Together, they have a great reverence for live music working with clients such as The National Urban League, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, The American Heart Association, Jackie Robinson Foundation and Carnegie Hall where she and Ray are proud to have produced multiple installments of their starstudded concert, a "Night of Inspiration". Vivian serves on the boards of the New Jersey Council on the Arts, Covenant House International, Living Legends and is an advisor to the Universal Hip Hop Museum. She is the Co-Founder and President of The Power 2 Inspire Foundation, which was created with her husband to identify and nurture music creators and industry leaders.

DR. KIT EVANS-FORD, DAVENPORT, IA Chaplain, professor, author, and social entrepreneur, Dr. Kit Evans-Ford has been a trainer and activist for over 15 years working relentlessly in the areas of nonviolence education and assisting people in healing form violence and abuse. An Adjunct Professor in the Department of Theology, Women and Gender Studies at St. Ambrose University, she is a certified spiritual director and the founder of Argrow's House of Healing and Hope in Davenport, Iowa. Argrow's House is a safe space where free services are offered daily for women healing from violence and abuse in the greater Quad Cities area. Argrow's House is also a successful social enterprise where women healing from violence and abuse create beautiful bath products that provide a living wage for themselves in a safe space that celebrates who they are. Dr. Kit is a 2019 MAJOR ETTA R. GRAY, MILLEDGEVILLE, GA A national Jefferson Award recipient in 2020, Major Etta R. Gray has dedicated her life to the service of her community. As a 30-year veteran of the Milledgeville Police Department, she has experienced firsthand how important it is to help children succeed. With a little help from the Chief of Police, Major Gray founded the Junior Police Academy, a summer camp directed at teaching children about avoiding drugs, gangs, peer pressure, and the importance of making good life choices. The Junior Police Academy was founded in 1999 and since then has grown from about 25 students to almost 150 students per year. When asked why these kids mean so much to her, Major Gray says, "I feel it is my personal mission to make sure that no kid goes without." Since then, Major Gray has been instrumental in getting programs in the force that help the community – like to Specialized Patrol unit that help guides the community. Major Gray also developed the Mentors In Blue (M.I.B.) program in 2016. This programs partners law enforcement officers with at risk youth in the community to be their mentors. In 2021, Milledgeville Police Chief Dray Swicord promoted Gray to chief of detectives, making her the first woman to ever hold the position with the Milledgeville Police Department. Major Gray motto is "My life is not mine alone, but one to be lived in service to others."

INGRID JOHNSON, NEWARK, NJ Ingrid Johnson, RN, MSN has been a nurse for over 20 years and is a nationally recognized expert in the field of Human Trafficking. In 2004, her 13-year-old daughter was missing for 11 months. Ingrid worked with law enforcement to recover her. Ingrid is manager of Patient Access at Overlook Medical Center a member of Atlantic Health System. She is co-chair of the Overlook Emergency Department Human Trafficking Committee. Ingrid is a founding member of the NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking and serves on the board of trustees and various committees. She serves on the NJ Commission on Human Trafficking. In 2018, honored by the Jefferson Foundation, Ingrid received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Champion for Justice Award and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting Local Communities.

RICHARD PEREZ, WEBSTER, NY A past recipient of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Service Benefitting Local Communities, Richard Perez has helped more than has helped more than 700 liver transplant recipients and 2,000 people who have undergone a transplant evaluation. Richard received his own life-saving liver transplant in 2003 and has made it his mission to educate others about organ donation and support families awaiting a transplant. From 2004 to 2010, Richard helped over 105 Rochester families avoid hotel costs and stressful daily commutes with his generosity. Thanks to Richard's efforts, according to the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network, the percentage of registered organ donors has grown from 27 percent to nearly 40 percent of viable residents.

PRISCILLA PUENTE, HOUSTON, TX A national Jefferson Award recipient in 2016, Priscilla Puente has been working as an operator at a LyondellBasell plant in Houston, Texas for over 15 years. She can still remember the amazement she felt from receiving her first paycheck, from the possibility that came with that kind of income. Her work with Pasadena Habitat for Humanity introduced her to The Bridge Over Troubled Waters (TBOTW), where she was able to tie that realization of economic opportunity to a cause. Priscilla decided to partner the Women of Steel, an activist branch of her union (United Steelworker Union Local 13-227), with TBOTW to change opportunities for women affected by domestic violence.

CHRISTAN RAINEY, NORTH CHARLESTON, SC Christan Antwan Rainey is the Founder and CEO of M.A.D. USA, Inc. (Men Against Domestic Violence/Abuse) an organization that is committed to reducing all forms of domestic violence. His passion for the work he does came as a result of losing five family members to domestic violence. Christan was appointed to be a part of the South Carolina Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force, and with help from other organizations throughout South Carolina and in 2016, the Domestic Violence Reform Bill was signed into law. In addition to his work at M.A.D., he is Assistant Chief with the North Charleston Fire Department and volunteers frequently in the area for other organizations. A TEDx speaker, Christan has an Associate Degree in Fire Science, Bachelors of Science in Fire Administration and is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. He received a national Jefferson Award in 2019.

DR. SANDY SAN MIGUEL, LAFAYETTE, IN Sandra F. San Miguel, DVM, PhD, is the associate dean for engagement at Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine. She leads the NIH NIGMS SEPA-supported League of VetaHumanz, a global, inclusive veterinary superhero league where veterinary professionals in academia, practice, research, government, and industry engage with community centers and schools across the globe to provide access and support for under-resourced children. Dr. San Miguel received a national Jefferson Award in 2019.

AMY RODRIGUEZ SHILLING, LADERA RANCH, CA With a commitment to service and a dedication to developing young leaders, Amy Rodriguez Shilling is best known for her work on the soccer field. On January 28th she retired from professional and international soccer after 11 pro seasons, two NWSL titles (2014, 2015), two Olympic gold medals (2008, 2012) and a World Cup championship (2015) and was named an assistant

coach for the University-of Solution had been and the california, her cultivamentater. As her side of two sons, Ryan and Luke. PageID 77

VALERIE WEISLER, BELFAST, UNITED KINGDOM Valerie Weisler is a community builder and activist from New York. At 14 years old, she founded The Validation Project, a youth empowerment organization that has grown into a global movement over the past nine years. Valerie's activism led her to receive the National Jefferson Award for Public Service at 16 years old. Valerie is also a Truman Scholar and a L'Oreal Paris Woman of Worth. Her work has been featured by Glamour, CNN, Oprah Magazine, and more. She holds a B.A in Education Advocacy and a minor in Spanish from Muhlenberg College, and is currently living in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where she is pursuing a Master's in Children's Rights at Queen's University.

To learn more about Multiplying Good and the Jefferson Awards, please visit: http://www.multiplyinggood.org

About Multiplying Good

Multiplying Good is a national nonprofit that believes in the power of service to others to unleash potential, inspire individuals, and transform lives. Multiplying Good fuels personal growth and leadership development through a continuum that starts with engagement and culminates in recognition. It has offices in 11 communities across the country, delivering on-the-ground impact where it is needed most. Founded in 1972 by Sam Beard, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Senator Robert Taft, Jr., the organization has recognized the extraordinary public service of thousands with its Jefferson Award. To learn more, visit MultiplyingGood.org or follow Multiplying Good on Facebook.

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THE POWER OF SERVICE TO OTHERS

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April 27, 2021

DeAndre Brown Lifeline to Success

Sent via electronic mail

Dear DeAndre,

Multiplying Good (formerly known as the Jefferson Awards Foundation) was founded in 1972 by Sam Beard, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr., and its Jefferson Award is America's most prestigious award celebrating extraordinary service to others.

It is our privilege to inform you that you have been nominated for a 2021 Jefferson Award in recognition of your commitment to improving the lives of others through service. After receiving your nomination and putting it through a rigorous internal voting process, the Multiplying Good Board of Selectors, a who's who of notable public figures, chose you as a finalist for Outstand Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged. Past recipients of this award include Bill & Melinda Gates, Bryan Stevenson, Mariska Hargitay and First Ladies Barbara Bush and Rosalynn Carter.

The Jefferson Awards offer a rare opportunity to unite all Americans in celebration of the good that is happening all around us – empowering outstanding recipients like you to do even more and inspiring those who hear the impact of your story into action. The Board would like to recognize your outstanding personal commitment to assisting formerly incarcerated individuals with the skills needed to re-enter the community and work force.

Hillary Schafer, CEO of Multiplying Good, will contact you to answer any questions you may have and to confirm your acceptance of this award. You may also reach her at (917) 656-0005. Please visit our website to learn more: www.multiplyinggood.org

Sincerely,

Hillary Schafer

CEO

Jack Russi

by for Joue Run

Chair, Board of Governors

Memphian

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Shelby County to build transitional housing for exoffenders

By Julia Baker, Daily Memphian

Updated: May 05, 2022 4:00 AM CT | Published: May 05, 2022 4:00 AM CT



DeAndre Brown, director of the Office of Reentry, stands in front of a demolished home that will be turned into new transitional housing for ex-offenders next to its office, on Thursday, April 28, 2022. (Mark Weber/The Daily Memphian)

Some ex-offenders who are showing progress in turning their lives around will soon have the opportunity to stay in transitional housing next to the Shelby County Office of Re-Entry in South Memphis.

The county began demolition of a house next to the office April 25 and will soon begin construction on the new housing.

The goal is to expand the campus so opportunities can be provided to ex-offenders who may have trouble reentering society due to social stigma. By being provided these opportunities, ex-offenders may be less likely to reoffend in the future.

Office of Re-Entry turning vacant buildings into transitional housing

"We found that one of the real barriers to a successful return to the community after having served a stint in prison is not just finding a job," Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris said. "It is also, in many cases, finding a place to live, a stable place to live. And so we're going to try to enter that space. And we're going to try to do it thoughtfully by engaging with the community."

The house, at 1348 Mississippi Boulevard, was an abandoned, blighted 1950s-era home previously owned by The Works, Inc. and gifted to the county so it could expand the campus.

Although other organizations have built similar transitional housing, this will be the first of its kind for Shelby County. The county <u>first attempted</u> to convert abandoned properties into transitional housing near Gleason Avenue and Wilson Street in South Memphis in 2019, but that plan deal fell through due to a Tennessee law.

"There is a state law that says you can redeem your property," Harris said. "If it's lost through foreclosure, you can redeem the property. And the owner, I don't know if it's an out-of-town owner or not, but they took advantage of that state law. And they actually redeemed the property, so they ended up getting it back. I think it's still blighted now."

The house on Mississippi Boulevard is still in the process of being demolished, and the county will wait to begin construction until it gathers input from the community.

So far, \$300,000 has been approved by the Shelby County Commission to fund the project.

Some time after this project is done, the county will begin a next phase and build additional housing on a property across the street.

The transitional housing will augment the office's <u>FOCUSED program</u>, which is an 11-week training program that helps with job readiness and gives ex-offenders opportunities to be selected for one of the office's vocational training programs. Through the program, participants also learn about family reconnection, financial literacy, healthy living, expungement and voting rights restoration.

The housing could hold as few as four ex-offenders or as many as 10.

Once former offenders are housed there, the main requirement is to continue to participate in the program.

"Our program is holistic," said DeAndre Brown, executive director of the reentry office. "So the programming should make sure that they're following that. ... That should cover all of those boundaries to keep them on the straight and narrow."

Officials also hope the presence of the expanded campus and decreased blight will create a safer environment in the surrounding neighborhood.

The county has established a transitional housing task force to assist with hammering down more details like construction dates and rendering plans.

Sometime in May, the county will host a kick-off event to gather community input.

TOPICS

SHELBY COUNTY OFFICE OF RE-ENTRY TRANSITIONAL HOUSING EX-OFFENDERS
FOCUSED



Julia Baker



Julia Baker covers criminal justice for The Daily Memphian. A lifelong Memphian, Julia graduated from the University of Memphis in 2021. Other publications and organizations she has written for include Chalkbeat, Memphis Flyer, Memphis Parent magazine and Memphis magazine.